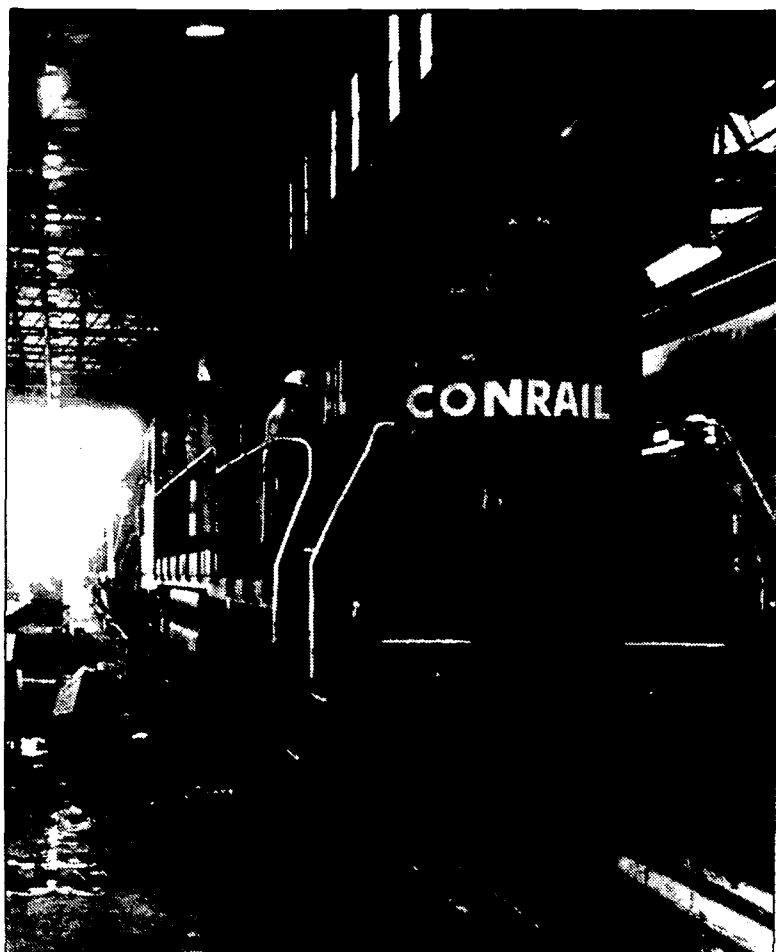


Will Mitterrand let
New Caledonia go?

THE STORY INSIDE



Steve Cagan

Why Congress is selling Conrail

By David Moberg

Why would anyone sell a profitable business for far less than he or she paid for it—let alone the investments improving it? Why would a government worried about deficits surrender a steady source of growing income for a one-time lump sum slightly more than it would earn from that source in only two years? Why would apostles of free enterprise want to reduce healthy competition? Why would politicians who constantly insist that government can't do anything right—and use that as justification for sacking one agency or program after another—want to abandon one government activity that nearly everyone agrees is working very well, far better than when it was in private hands?

Answers to those questions may help explain the Department of Transportation's recommendation that Congress sell the Consolidated Rail Corporation, or Conrail, to the Norfolk Southern Railroad. Here's a clue: Reagan's ideological hostility to government doing anything—except maybe rattling sabers or waging war.

Conrail has been an odd and instructive experiment. It incidentally demonstrates some of the potential achievements and pitfalls of an "industrial policy"—apparently last year's passing fashion among Democrats but a persisting option for government nonetheless. Yet the debate in Congress during the coming months will focus simply on the terms of sale, not the more fundamental question: why sell at all?

In the decades after World War II, American railroads slid downhill as government policies subsidized truck competition and management neglected even basic maintenance, preferring to invest in real estate or other ventures rather than aggressively improve railroads. At the same time, the flight of capital from the Northeast and Midwest, the pro-Sunbelt bias of federal spending (especially on the military) and the failure of many core industries in the "rust bowl" to modernize all undercut rail freight revenues. In this context, the burden of labor costs and ineffective, cumbersome regulation sped the decline.

The 1970 bankruptcy of the Penn Central crystallized the worst of these tendencies into one massive debacle, as many of Penn Central's major investors—including the Allegheny Corp.—took advantage of their inside information and dumped their stock in advance of the collapse. Other rail lines in the Northeast-Midwest region were also failing, and the transportation fundamental to the region's economy was threatened. Under authority of a 1973 Regional Railway Reorganization Act, Congress created Conrail out of Penn Central and six other railroads.

The former owners of these bankrupt lines were paid \$2.8 billion after pressing claims against the government. "What they lost suddenly became extremely valuable to them," comments a spokesman for the U.S. Railway Association (USRA). A nonprofit federal corporation, with an advisory board including representatives of federal, state and local government, industry, labor, shippers and finance, USRA organized and now monitors Conrail. The new regional railroad lumbered along, losing money and gaining enemies in Congress, and

eventually used up \$7.6 billion in federal aid paying off creditors and modernizing the system.

Railroads were partly deregulated in 1980, but the biggest change for Conrail came the following year. The new Reagan administration was determined to sell Conrail piecemeal, citing the line's continued losses to buttress its own ideological vendetta against the publicly owned corporation. After widespread protest, Congress passed an alternative—the Northeast Rail Service Act—that allowed Conrail to sell or abandon much of its track and service more quickly. Also, workers who lost their jobs received a one-time payment rather than lifetime severance benefits. L. Stanley Crane, an experienced railroad executive, took over management, and by nearly all accounts greatly improved Conrail's performance. Workers agreed to a 12 percent wage deferral—the key to making the package work. The legislation also provided that Conrail be sold.

The much smaller Conrail, down to 38,000 employees from a peak of 100,000, began turning a profit—\$66 million in 1981, \$49 million in 1982, \$288 million in 1983 and \$500 million in 1984—in the face of the deep recession in its region that savaged steel, autos, coal and other big rail freight users. Despite this success and the prospect that, even if it were to be sold, it would bring a higher price in a few years as profits grew, the Reagan administration rushed to sell. A group of Conrail's unions, through the Railway Labor Executives Association, put together a proposal for employee ownership. (The unions already owned 15 percent of Conrail.) After Allegheny's bid of \$1 billion, later pushed up to \$1.2 billion, was deemed reasonable by the government's consultant, Goldman, Sachs and other private bidders came up with similar offerings. Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole narrowed the final list to Allegheny, Norfolk Southern and a bid by hotelier J. Willard Marriott (with money from the Bass brothers of Texas).

In all cases, the bids seem strikingly low. After all, the U.S. paid more than twice that amount for the old lines before modernization. In any case, Conrail has about \$800 million cash on hand and is bringing in nearly half the purchase price in profits annually. Furthermore, Conrail's plant and rolling stock are worth about \$4.4 billion and has, by some estimates, several billion dollars in other assets. Is all this worth only \$1.2 billion?

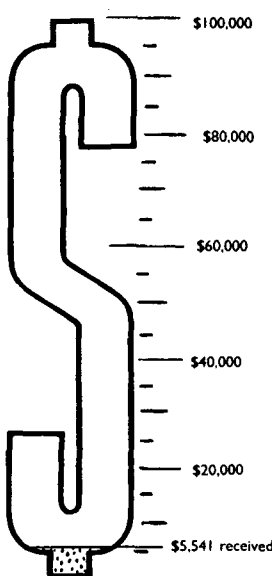
At the last minute, the unions backed the Allegheny bid, although the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks (BRAC) had previously supported a public offering of stock as an alternative to sale to a single buyer. But because Conrail management backed a public offering, other unions, bitter over job losses, rejected that. Yet a number of key senators and representatives from Conrail's service area strongly prefer a public sale. Rep. Bob Edgar (D-PA) has introduced legislation to that effect. It includes provision for a permanent government "golden share," a veto that can be voted at any time in defense of overriding public interests to prevent gross mismanagement.

The unions, many shippers and numerous Congress members oppose Norfolk Southern not only because they think the price is low, but also because they are convinced the sale will reduce competition (CSX and several small regional lines would be the only competition in much of the Northeast, South and Midwest). The Department of Transportation got Norfolk Southern, as well as the other finalists, to agree to a list of public interest covenants—to retain controlling interest for five years, to keep the main Philadelphia office, not to defer maintenance, to keep a \$500 million cash reserve and limit dividends, to make at least a minimum investment and not strip assets. Norfolk Southern gave up Conrail's potential tax credits (but the government's more sizeable loans were also forgiven). The proposed combination, which would be the largest railroad in the country, would be required to sell some 1,500 of Conrail's 13,500 miles of track to small regional lines—in theory to maintain competition.

The other bids offered labor expanded ownership (30 to 35 percent) in compensation for wages deferred and seats on the board. Norfolk Southern apparently wants to buy out the current workers' share. Although it has said it would eliminate no more than 2,530 jobs, some unionists think 10,000 jobs would be lost through the merger. And nobody knows what might happen after the five-year covenants cease.

In Conrail's case, government acted to salvage and rationalize a critical part of the Northeast-Midwest infrastructure, despite years of mismanagement and exploitation. The cost to workers was high in lost jobs, but in the context of private rapaciousness and public neglect of railroads, such cuts were inevitable. Only a concerted policy to develop railroads could have reversed that. And continued public ownership of Conrail could have served precisely that end.

Now that the hard work has been done and the necessary huge sums spent to undo private malfeasance, the government is virtually giving away the store—or railroad, in this case. For all its shortcomings, Conrail showed that government intervention and public ownership can work as well as or better than private control. If for no other reason, Reagan is anxious to sell it as quickly—and cheaply—as possible. Who knows? The example might be contagious.



First Week

The first week's returns on our \$100,000 fund drive are nothing to write home about. So far, we have received \$5,541 from 175 subscribers, and we have received two pledges—of \$85 and seven new sustainers. At this rate, it would take 20 weeks to reach our goal, and we don't have 20 weeks to spare.

We have no desire—and no need—to cry wolf, but our cash flow is extremely tight. We need to get as many contributions as we can as quickly as we can. So if you intend to respond to our appeal, please do so as soon as possible. And if you're undecided because we have not pushed the desperation button, please consider this a warning that failure to respond may bring the wolf back to our door.

IN THESE TIMES

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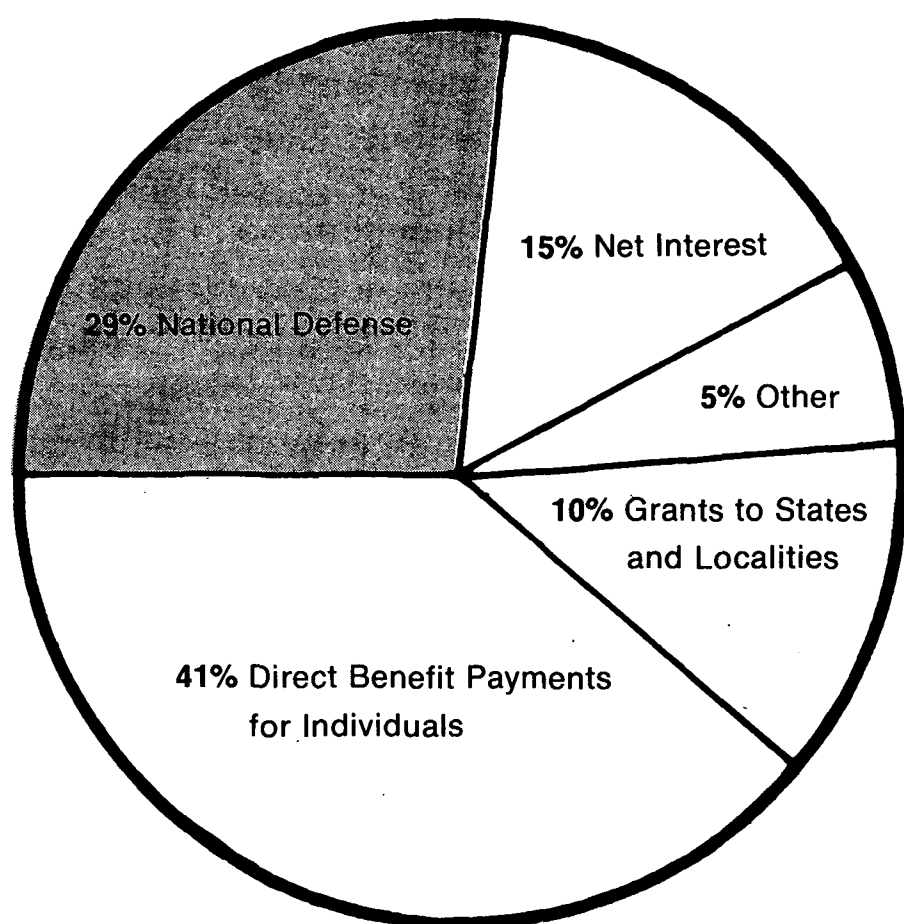
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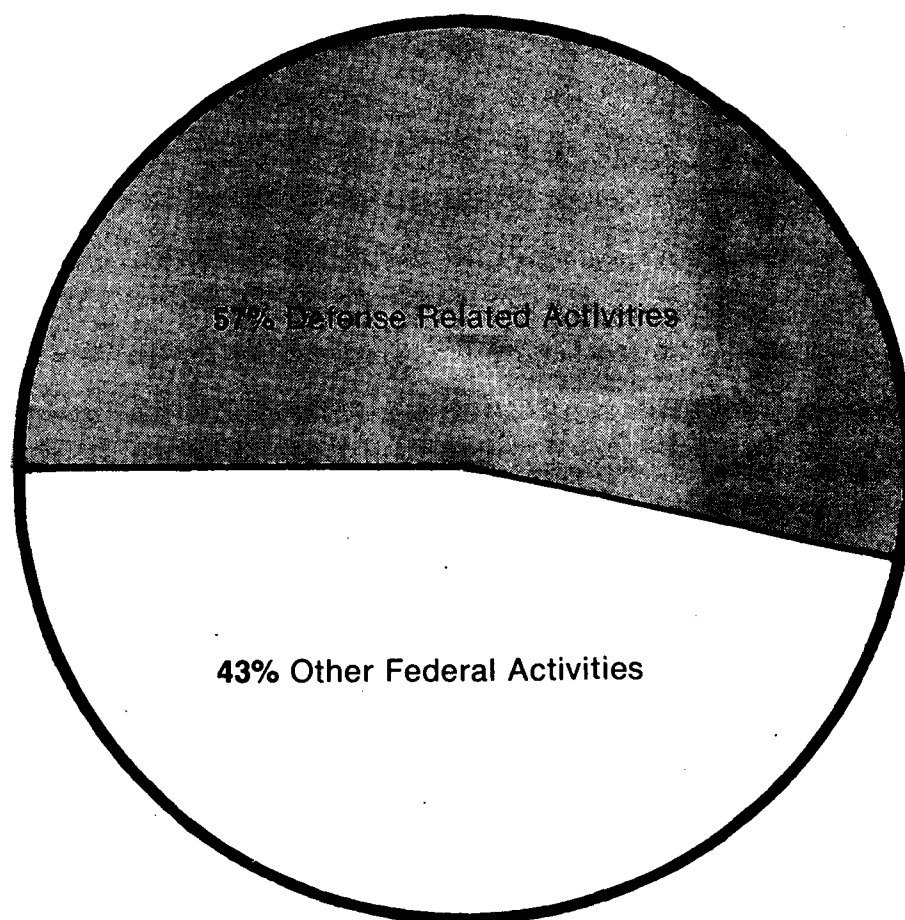
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IN THESE TIMES

Total Federal Budget



SOURCE: OMB

Federal Fund Outlays
Financed by General Revenues

Uncovering the real defense share

By Keith A. Sinzinger

WASHINGTON

ONE OF THE MOST WIDELY USED illustrations of President Reagan's fiscal 1986 budget is a pie chart showing the budget dollar and "where it goes," with a piece worth 29 cents representing national defense. But as in past years, this sort of measure understates—by definition—the true cost of the national security apparatus. Depending on the ingredients of the pie and how you slice it, the real defense share ranges up to almost 57 percent (see graphic).

The national defense function, as defined by the budget, includes most Defense Department spending, the atomic weapons programs of the Energy Department and several smaller "defense-related activities," such as civil defense and the Selective Service System. In total, this accounts for \$285.7 billion in spending for the year starting October 1—29 percent of the \$973.7 billion federal budget.

Not counted as defense spending is the most easily measured cost of national defense past—veterans' benefits. These programs and services, in a separate category that totals \$26.8 billion, "recognize the sacrifices made in military service," the budget says.

Also separate is the \$18.3 billion budget for international affairs, intended to "support U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives." About one-half of this budget funds international security assistance programs, described as "vital instruments of U.S. national security and foreign policy." Another \$2.5 billion goes for general conduct of foreign affairs, including most State Department operations and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. And \$1 billion is allocated for foreign education and propaganda activities, mainly U.S. Information Agency programs such as the Voice of America and Radio Marti.

Analysts differ as to the amount of international affairs spending that should be considered defense-related. In the broadest terms, all these programs support national security in a diplomatic-military-development partnership. Under narrow terms, only some international security assistance would apply.

Another expense attributable in part to national defense is interest on the public debt, which appears on the pie chart as a 15-cent slice of the budget dollar. Stephen Daggett, a senior research analyst with the privately funded Center for Defense Information in Washington, says 66 percent of the net interest payment in 1986, or \$93.5 billion, stems from past defense spending. Daggett said he arrived at his figure through a computer analysis of military spending, federal funding and deficit figures from

NASA's is budgeted to spend \$7.7 billion in 1986. None of it is under the defense heading, yet 11 percent of NASA's spending goes to research in defense-related aircraft technology.

1940 to the present.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is budgeted to spend \$7.7 billion in 1986, but none of it is under the national defense heading. Daggett attributes 11 percent of NASA spending on space activities to defense, based on previous findings by the General Accounting Office (GAO). NASA also performs separate research in defense-related aircraft technology, which the budget describes as a transportation function.

Similarly, non-NASA science programs, totaling \$2.2 billion next year, in part support defense research and engineering. And other transportation activities have at least secondary defense roles acknowledged in the budget. These include the federal highway program, merchant marine subsidies, the Federal Aviation Administration and the Coast Guard—a \$2.7 billion service that becomes part of the Navy during wartime.

Also defense-related in part, but under separate budget headings, are the \$1 billion National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which provides weather services, and the \$635 million impact aid program, which helps to fund school districts in areas where military bases and other large government installations are located. Daggett allocates one-third of impact aid spending to defense, based on historical data, while others assign defense a larger share.

Additional defense-related costs, though difficult to calculate, might be found in the budgets of the \$2.5 billion Army Corps of Engineers and federal law enforcement agencies such as the Secret Service (\$228 million), the FBI (\$1.2 billion) and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (\$578 million).

A final "hidden" defense cost is central government overhead—from the commander-in-chief to the tax collectors, auditors, personnel administrators and records clerks. While some argue that these activities would exist even without a military,

business practice would assign defense a share of these costs according to its share of the overall budget.

Under this \$4.8 billion general government category are the White House and its various entities, including the National Security Council and the Office of Management and Budget. Also included are the central personnel policy and housekeeping-recordkeeping agencies of the bureaucracy. (The Defense Department employs about 37 percent of the federal civilian work force.) And this function includes the legislative branch, which not only funds the defense program but, through the GAO, investigates it and settles contract disputes.

Daggett uses a conservative approach to calculate the total defense cost of the fiscal 1986 budget. Starting with the official national defense definition, he adds the costs of veterans benefits, a share of the debt service, international security assistance programs and parts of NASA and impact aid for a total of \$416.3 billion. That would increase the defense slice of the total budget dollar to about 43 cents, not including overhead and various other costs that arguably could be counted as defense.

But Daggett takes the analysis a step further by changing the ingredients of the pie. His new budget dollar includes only federal fund outlays financed by general revenues—excluding trust funds such as Social Security. In this context, the smaller pie has a larger defense share of 56.7 percent—almost twice the portion depicted in budget documents.

The federal deficit, budgeted at \$180 billion for fiscal 1986, "is caused entirely by the shortfall in general revenues to pay for federal fund outlays," Daggett says. "More than 30 percent of federal fund outlays need to be financed by borrowing. In other words, for every dollar spent on defense, we need to borrow 33 cents."

Keith Sinzinger, a Washington writer, is the former managing editor of *Federal Times* newspaper.

By Salim Muwakkil

AS THE MEDICAID PROGRAM hobbles toward its 20th anniversary, it faces crippling new restraints proposed by the Reagan administration. Enacted in 1965 (Title XIX of the Social Security Act), Medicaid is a joint federal-state program designed to provide health care for the nation's poor. It now serves an estimated 22 million people, mostly poor families with children, the poor elderly and disabled. This fiscal year, the government will give states and local governments nearly \$23 billion for the program. States and municipalities will spend another \$19 billion. The administration, citing a need to restrain health care costs, proposes to cut \$1.1 billion in fiscal year 1985 and \$6.5 billion over the next three years.

Critics of the administration's Medicaid proposals contend the cuts will simply result in less medical access for the poor. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a private research organization, contends the proposals would double the Medicaid reductions made during Reagan's first term and "would be virtually certain to result in substantial cuts in medical services to low-income persons throughout the country."

Responding to earlier Reaganomic cuts, states have already lowered their payments to hospitals, reduced benefits and tightened eligibility requirements. Hospitals have consequently become more stringent in their admitting procedure. In fact, there are increasing reports that many are refusing to treat certain patients. So widespread has this practice become, it prompted a scathing editorial in the latest edition of the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine*. The editorial, written by *Journal* editor Dr. Arnold Relman, read in part, "Medical judgment, compassion and common sense are nowadays too often overruled by the economic concerns of hospital managers."

But even Medicaid's most dedicated boosters would be hard pressed to deny that the program's spiraling costs (combined federal-state expenditures have nearly tripled since 1975) have less to do with the delivery of quality health care than with the delivery of financial benefits to health care providers and their suppliers. After all, doctors are the ones who decide whether a patient should be tested, whether they will be hospitalized and for how long; what drugs to prescribe and all other matters concerning the health care dollar. And since Medicaid, Medicare (the federal health-care program for the elderly) and even private health insurance have long reimbursed health-care providers on the basis of "what those providers claim are their 'reasonable costs,'" it seems fairly obvious that those costs will be kept as high as possible.

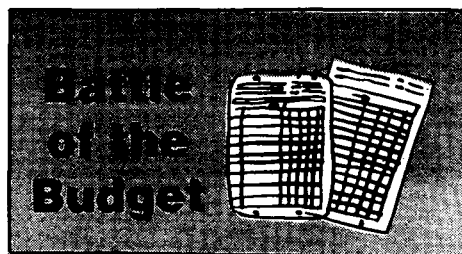
Those are the costs that administration cuts are seeking to reduce, according to David Stockman, director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). "Our proposals would affect providers and vendors of services rather than beneficiaries," he contends. Stockman argues that the administration's first round of cuts and congressional action to change the reimbursement policies has already tightened up the program and the current cuts would continue that trend. Some states are contracting with providers on a flat fee basis. Others have taken steps ranging from restricting abortions to eliminating payment for eyeglasses, dental work or certain medications. Virginia, for example, now requires Medicaid recipients to pay a nominal fee for services.

As a result, Medicaid is receiving unusual praise from many conservatives. Even the President's Council of Economic Advisors gave the program a clean bill of health. In a recent report, the council wrote, "the public image of Medicaid is that of a welfare medical program..." and that "allegations abound that these clients abuse the program. Other critics point to abuses by Medicaid providers and policymakers have become increasingly concerned about 'Medicaid mills' in which low-quality care is provided. None of these perceptions is accurate."

But some critics argue that the Medicaid reductions are less an attempt to moderate health care costs than an ideological assault on a program left over from the Great Society era. Sara Rosenbaum of the Children's Defense Fund, charges the Reagan cuts are a "meat-axe approach that will wreak devastation in the lives of this country's poor children."

John Ehrenreich, the editor of *The Cultural Crisis of Modern Medicine*, contends, "Reagan budget-cutting has little to do with curbing medical costs or balancing the budget, much less with improving people's health. Rather it is simply part of the effort to redistribute income from the poor (including a large portion of the users of health services) to the well-to-do (including a large number of health providers, individual and corporate)." He says the penalty for the providers' greed in keeping costs high is being shifted onto the needy individuals either directly in increased costs or indirectly by forcing the acceptance of a lower level of health services.

But most medical economists argue that merely changing the way federal health care programs are financed and managed will



This frustrates the program's original mandate, which is to provide medical care for the poor.

•In the wake of Reagan's first term budget cuts, many states have imposed new limits on how long Medicaid pays for hospital stays. Several states erased coverage for 18-to-21-year-olds and nearly every state cut services to women and children and community health centers.

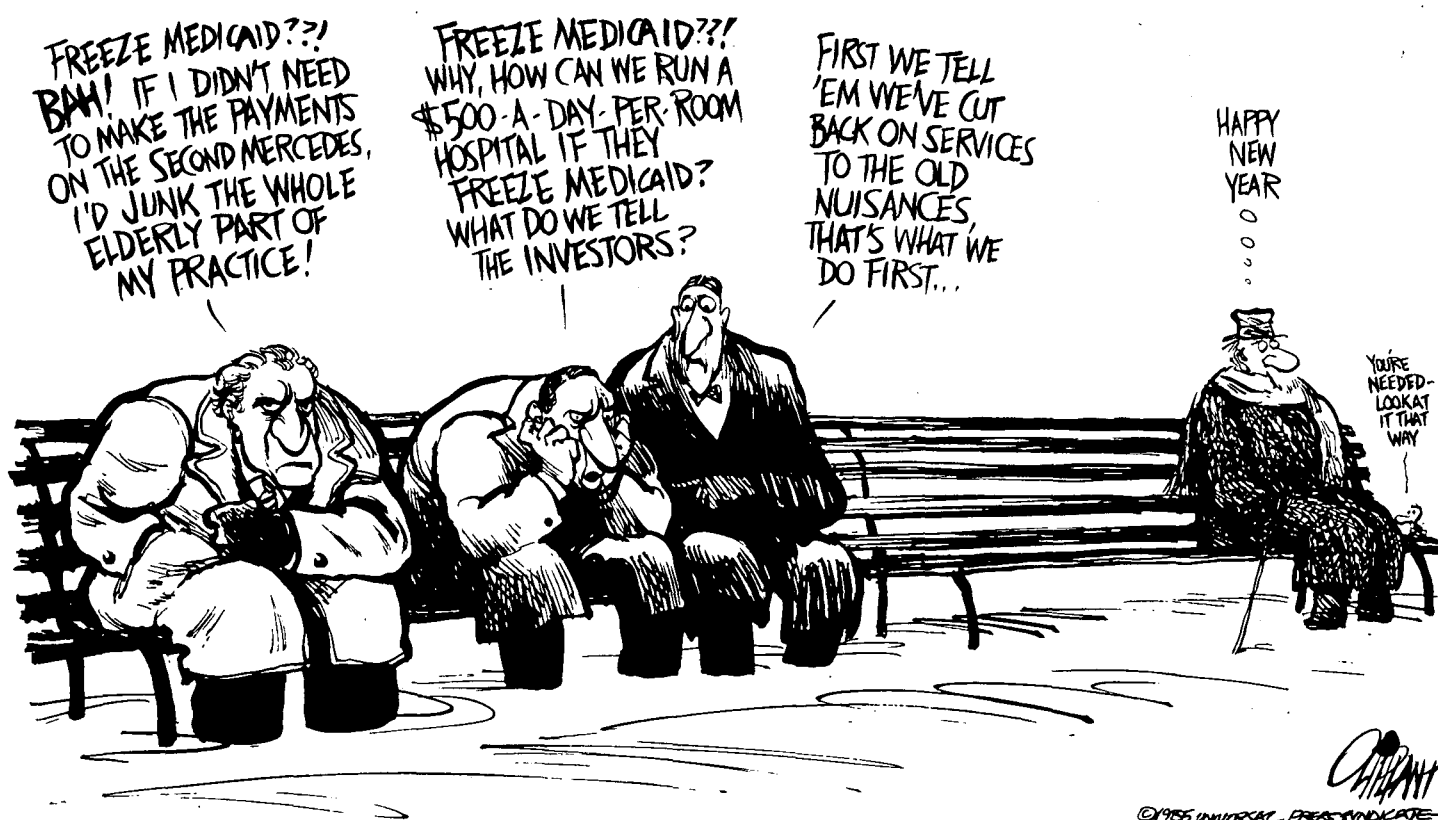
•Medicaid is interlinked with at least 15 programs, including Social Security, Medicare and federal and state welfare agencies, creating a bureaucratic swamp (and an ample opportunity to defraud the program).

•Services differ widely from state to state. For example, Medicaid covers 40 days a year in a hospital in Idaho but only 15 days in Alabama. Some states deny any aid to two-parent families.

IN THE NATION

HEALTH CARE

No clean bill of health for Medicaid program



not solve the general crisis of health care. "The American health-care system is not going to be turned around by playing with Medicare and Medicaid," warns professor Rashi Fein of the Harvard Medical School. "They are only part of the action."

Most of those knowledgeable on the subject conclude that basic reforms are needed not only to control health-care costs but to make the Medicaid program more effective. A 1983 report researched by the Center for the Study of Social Policy found that Medicaid was failing in its designed mission. Among other things, the report disclosed:

•About 60 percent of people below the poverty line are not covered although the program was designed to assist low-income persons. In most states, Medicaid goes only to those on welfare or a Social Security disability.

•The aged, disabled and mentally retarded make up one-fourth of Medicaid's recipients but account for three-fourths of its costs—mostly for nursing home care.

The study panel recommended separating Medicaid into two programs. One would provide basic care for the poor, and the other would be a "continuing care" system for the elderly, disabled and mentally retarded.

Many health-care experts are anxious about the growing strength of for-profit health care. They are concerned that if profit becomes the primary motive for providers, then health care will deteriorate for those who are least economically attractive.

"The real story of health care today is the rise of corporate medicine for profit," warns Dr. Quentin Young, former medical director of Chicago's Cook County Hospital. "While unions were falling for the 'fool's gold' of private health insurance, hospitals were reaping the bonanza of payment schemes that fostered high technology, excessive specialization and profitable enterprises. Now, when the crunch comes, everyone's screaming 'don't cut this' and 'don't cut that.' Meanwhile, corporate medicine is becoming the biggest industry

in the U.S. It's a \$400 billion industry."

According to Paul Starr, author of *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, today's need for economic efficiency, an oversupply of doctors and the need for huge amounts of capital to invest in expensive medical technology is changing the face of health-care delivery. As increasingly more hospitals are being acquired by corporate chains—they now own approximately 30 percent of the nation's community hospital beds—and increasingly more doctors start working for salaries as opposed to fees, the small community hospital will disappear. Starr argues that the decades-long dependence of hospitals on private physicians has been reversed by today's realities: doctors can't survive without hospitals and their technology.

"Maybe you shouldn't weep for us," Young says. "But doctors are becoming nothing more than hired hands. I think it's a crime the way the door has been opened for a corporate takeover and Medicaid and Medicare had a lot to do with it."

In addition to being charged with paving the way for the corporate takeover of medicine, Medicaid has also been accused of perpetrating class discrimination. In a 1981 article in *The Nation*, Toby Cohen wrote, "Although an afterthought to the Medicare bill of 1965, Medicaid became the model for much social legislation in the past decade and a half, and signified a radical departure from New Deal democracy. Under Medicaid, medical benefits were not provided for all citizens; they were provided for the welfare poor and paid for by the working taxpayers. That is, instead of spreading benefits by restructuring the tax system, Medicaid redistributed wealth in the form of services—and did so in a way that favored one class over another."

Cohen argued that by pitting the poor against the middle class, the liberal Democrats who authored most of the Great Society programs were in fact hastening the fall of

the old Democratic coalition. "How can the Democratic Party now convince the poor and the middle class, those on welfare and those who work, the Jew and the black, that they are not each other's enemies; that their best interests lie in uniting against a tax structure that protects the wealthy power blocs?" he wrote.

In all this discussion, Young contends, very little is being said about policy that actually addresses the health problems of the poor. "These problems are, as everyone knows, those of aging, the birth process, substance addictions, malnutrition and hunger, crippling and killing due to blood vessel diseases, especially hypertension, trauma from guns and automobiles and cancers mainly due to industrial processes and waste mismanagement.

"Who's talking about community clinics?" Young asks. "That's surely an opportunity for public-private partnerships. Who's talking about anything other than various little cuts in an antiquated program?"

Organizer Jim Benn and Dorothy—the blast furnace threatened by demolition.



Michael Hoyt

PENNSYLVANIA

Steelworkers propose viable plan to revive dying plant

By Michael Hoyt

DUQUESNE, PA.

IN THIS LITTLE TOWN, MANY MEN LOVE Dorothy, some women too. Dorothy is a blast furnace, the largest facility left for pouring hot metal in the winding string of towns along the Monongahela River outside Pittsburgh. The people who operate her broke production records last spring and won U.S. Steel's "Ironmaster" award—red jackets with a black and orange patch that says "keep on pumpin'."

That honor is remembered now as a kiss of death. Just weeks after bestowing the award, the company shut down all but a small portion of the 260-acre Duquesne plant, saying it could not make money there. Last October it announced plans to knock down two-thirds of the facility, including Dorothy, to clear a site for an industrial park. Demolition was to begin before Christmas.

The furnace is still standing, however, and a surprisingly muscular labor and community coalition has drawn a protective circle around her. Quiet, steady organizing by a community group called the Tri-State Conference on Steel has begun to show results in the troubled Monongahela Valley. So has some innovative thinking in the United Steelworkers Union, which is pursuing new ideas and strategies and working with people who have been among its toughest critics in the past. Dorothy Six, the full name of the blast furnace, has been rescued three times so far, and the coalition is challenging U.S. Steel's right to destroy her.

A high point in the drama came at the end of January, when a consulting firm hired by the union released the results of a \$150,000 preliminary study of the mill and its markets. U.S. Steel has insisted that the

plant, which once employed more than 3,000 people, is no longer viable in today's market. Company chairman David Roderick claimed it would take him "five minutes on the back of an envelope" to prove it. He also said the "hot end" of the mill, where iron and steel is produced, needs \$400-500 million in modernization.

The Steelworker study, however, contends that the plant is viable. With an initial \$90 million investment and with some degree of worker ownership, it could employ about 600 steelworkers. Without cutting union wages, the study said, those workers can lower costs enough to compete directly with foreign steel in a "lucrative market" for semi-finished products. Dorothy could be a cornerstone for keeping steel in the valley.

By all accounts the atmosphere on January 28 in the bingo hall of Saints Peter and Paul Church, where the study was released to a standing-room crowd of some 700 people, was like a revival. "You can see people getting hope," said Mike Stout, a steelworker and a Tri-State organizer.

The coalition contends that saving Dorothy and the Duquesne plant is key to keeping a steel industry in the Monongahela Valley. So the local union in Duquesne has a 24-hour watch on the gates of the steel mill and a phone tree that they claim can raise 2,000 people if wrecking equipment shows up. The next move is U.S. Steel's, but Dorothy Six has become the centerpiece in a drama about a community's right to a hand in its own economic fate.

Duquesne's high school football team, the "Dukes," won the Western Pennsylvania Athletic League championship last year. It was a brief, shining moment for a hard-pressed town. It's been downhill since about 1980 in Duquesne, as it has been for the rest of the manufacturing and steel

towns in the area. The service, financial and high-tech renaissance in Pittsburgh, which is partly wishful thinking anyway, has held no relief for the Monongahela Valley.

It's easy to discern the economic base in the towns along the river. There is Steel Valley Auto Parts, Steel City Pawn Shop, Steeltown Beauty Shop. At Steel Valley High School the football team is the Ironmen and the newspaper is the *Ironical*. Economic life flows out of six mighty steel mills, all owned by U.S. Steel, and like six damaged hearts they are slowly shutting down.

The Homestead Works, just up the river from Duquesne, for example, employed about 7,000 in 1980, down to about 600 now. The National Works, a nearby pipe mill, had 4,500 working around the clock as late as 1981, now just a handful. Leo Zabelsky, Duquesne's 42-year-old mayor, said the town has laid off 11 of 16 members of the public works department, and "the school district is hurt quite a bit." As he spoke he warmed up a tow truck. Even the mayor's car-repair shop, Leo's Servicenter, has had to let two of its three mechanics go.

Tri-State Conference on Steel, which includes low-level union officials from steel plants and other manufacturing facilities, local clergy, attorneys and academics, began sounding warnings in the Monongahela Valley even before the mill layoffs began. In a region that has seen cyclical swings in the steel industry for three generations, the warnings were largely ignored. Tri-State has its roots in the Youngstown, Ohio, plant shutdowns of the late '70s, and later broadened its focus to include western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and northern West Virginia.

These days it operates out of a Munhall, Pa., school building, under a statue of St. Joseph the Worker, a couple of blocks from

one of the magnificent libraries Andrew Carnegie left behind. Tri-State's grand strategy is to create a public authority to run the local steel industry—one that would use a local government's power of eminent domain to take over abandoned or soon to be abandoned plants and equipment.

Saving jobs would be a new category of the "public good" necessary for the use of eminent domain powers, but the idea seems to gain a step or two each time it is tried. In 1981, Tri-State unsuccessfully tried to adopt their strategy at a specialty steel company northwest of Pittsburgh, and in 1983 a similar campaign foundered at the big Mesta Machine Co. in West Homestead.

Tri-State members believe their organizing efforts were hampered last year because people confused them with another organization, the Network to Save Mon Valley, which includes militant unionists and a group of Protestant ministers called the Denominational Ministry Strategy. The Network gets national publicity with its tactics—placing dead fish in Mellon Bank deposit vaults, for example, or interrupting services in wealthy churches. Most Tri-State members believe the Network has alienated working people and also divided groups that Tri-State is trying to unite in a coalition, although some concede that the Network first let the world know that Steel Valley would try to fight back.

For Tri-State, the pace picked up last fall. A foundation grant enabled the group to hire three organizers, who have been doggedly convincing local political officials to take the legal steps necessary to form an authority, the tool for the use of eminent domain. In September Tri-State convinced two planning organizations representing 25 municipalities to call for a feasibility study of the shut-down Duquesne plant. "That broke a credibility gap for us," said organizer Jim Benn, "and it raised the eyebrows of the United Steelworkers."

Stout and others in Tri-State have been fierce critics of the union in the past, but the alliance is a strong one. "I don't know who's changed more, them or us," said USW spokesman Gary Hubbard.

The union brought political clout, legal resources and money to the effort. "We don't want to raise false hopes," Hubbard said. "But every steelworker in the Mon Valley understands that U.S. Steel intends

to allow all the other facilities there to deteriorate. We want U.S. Steel to respond, and to be willing to sell the facility as a private enterprise. If that does not happen we're prepared to substitute other alternatives, and that includes Tri-State's idea of a Steel Valley Authority.

According to Hubbard, the union has become more sophisticated about the ins and outs of worker buyouts in recent years. "We're taking innovative approaches, not just to save jobs, but to make the enterprises viable," he said. The union expects to announce soon that a New York investment bank will join the effort in Duquesne, exploring financing options.

Without Duquesne, the sole facility for producing iron and steel in the Monongahela Valley is in the Edgar Thomson Works in nearby Braddock, which Tri-State says does not have the capacity to keep Steel Valley alive. So U.S. Steel's announcement about Dorothy was the spark the coalition needed. "They picked the wrong mill," Stout said.

"But more than that, there was a boiling, simmering anger about U.S. Steel and what they were doing," he said. "It was there, and it was up to us to put the match to it. We took the match and lit the fire."

Next to the '70s generation of furnaces that have become standard in the Third World, Dorothy looks small. But when she began operations, Benn said, she was the largest blast furnace in the world. That was in 1963. Dorothy is just 22 years old. According to Benn, she's modern enough for the valley's needs—a computerized furnace with two tap holes for continuous production. She is teamed with flexible and efficient Basic Oxygen Process furnaces that turn her iron into steel.

"There will never be the capital around to rebuild something like that," said Stout. "They want to destroy something that can't be replaced."

Early in November, the union, politicians and community groups in the coalition presented Allegheny County officials with a proposal for the feasibility study. And after a tour of the facility and discussions with steel-market experts, the county agreed to contribute \$50,000 for it. The USW matched that amount, and the balance was supplied by the city of Pittsburgh and Duquesne Light. U.S. Steel, which had postponed demolition until December 10 at the request of the county, said it would not do so again. But after pressure from county officials, Congressman Joseph Gaydos and USW President Lynn Williams, the company granted Dorothy a second reprieve, until February 2.

As the study got underway, a dozen laid-off steelworkers from USW Local 1256 in Duquesne volunteered to winterize Dorothy, a task that has never been necessary for the constantly burning furnace. They pumped in 550 gallons of antifreeze and then split a bottle of champagne. Meanwhile, the borough of Munhall, where two council members are laid off from the Duquesne plant, became the first town to take all the legal steps toward setting up an authority. Five other towns have gone part way, and Tri-State expects others to follow.

When the New York firm hired to do the feasibility study, Locker-Abrecht Associates, made it public at the end of January, the *News Messenger*, the main local paper in the valley, ran eight stories—five on the front page and three on page two. When it was unveiled to the public, State Rep. Tom Michlovic, who chaired the meeting, told the steelworkers crammed into the bingo hall that the report would let potential financiers know that the plant can make it.

"Perhaps more important, it questions the accuracy of U.S. Steel's conclusions that the Mon Valley is no longer profitable," Michlovic said.

Leon Lynch, a USW vice president, told the crowd, "We will stand with you until you run the string out. We hope it will be when Duquesne opens again. It is do-able."

Mike Locker, Locker-Abrecht's president, said, "We believe the Duquesne facility has a long future. We did not start that way. We started with skepticism. We said if it is not viable, we will tell you."

The feasibility study shows that with a \$90 million investment and some degree of worker ownership the Duquesne plant could employ 600 steelworkers.

U.S. Steel declined to supply data, but Locker had interviewed dozens of production and supervisory employees, including the former superintendent of the mill. Data Resources Inc. provided marketing information, and a Pittsburgh engineering firm looked at the condition of the equipment. Locker-Abrecht's preliminary study concludes that there is a "growing market in the U.S. for the type of semi-finished products available from Duquesne," particularly in light of shrinking U.S. steelmaking capacity.

For semi-finished steel products, imports have increasingly filled the demand, the report says, rising from 8 percent in 1980 to a projected 61 percent this year. "The steel industry in the U.S. needs efficient facilities to compete with imports. The study's initial findings indicate that Duquesne can be a low-cost producer and meet this objective."

With sharply lowered costs, the report says, Duquesne could target as its prime customers domestic steel producers who currently import semi-finished steel. Concentrating on those markets, the report notes, "would avoid the problem of displacing employees in other U.S. facilities." Lowering costs would take labor-management cooperation and a sharp reduction in the workforce.

On its own, Duquesne would need an investment of some \$90 million to get started, the report says, although installing the latest in steelmaking technology, a continuous caster, would cost \$150 million more. (Some steel experts believe a continuous caster may be "the missing link" in the Monongahela Valley, or, in other words, an eventual necessity.)

The study makes it clear that the "hot end" of the Duquesne mill has little chance without use of all or part of the "cold end," where steel is rolled and pressed into marketable shapes. And though most of that part of the mill is closed, it was not slated

Duquesne's Mayor Leo Zabelsky prefers Lee Iacocca to Jesse Jackson, but he's 'looking to get people work.'

for demolition, and U.S. Steel's intentions for it are not clear. The report proposes several possible arrangements with the company, from outright purchase to a leasing arrangement to a joint venture.

As for who would own and invest in a new company, the report offers a number of intriguing suggestions, including joint venture with U.S. Steel or with major raw material suppliers or customers. All the options involve some degree of worker ownership, which the report says would be a critical element for "fostering an environment conducive to making Duquesne Works a cost-competitive producer." And a stock-for-wages tradeoff could be necessary at some point.

U.S. Steel, the study maintains, could benefit in several ways from a rejuvenated mill in Duquesne—selling raw materials to it, for instance, or collecting fees for use of the company's transportation network, thus lowering its costs. Without Duquesne, the report says, the remaining U.S. Steel facilities in the valley face higher costs. The destruction of Dorothy Six, and her companion oxygen furnaces, "is part of a longer range corporate strategy for disinvestment in the Mon Valley." A five-page section details the destructive effects on the towns and their people. An industrial park is not likely to lead to many jobs, since half the land set aside for industrial parks in Allegheny County is now vacant.

The report calls for a six-month delay in demolition, and an in-depth study of the possibilities.

U.S. Steel is not a company that is used to listening to advice, although the company received the report with a cool respect. Once again, Dorothy's date with a wrecker was postponed. Chairman Roderick promised an open mind: "We have investigated the economics of steelmaking at Duquesne over a prolonged period and continue to believe that steelmaking at that site is no longer viable. Nonetheless, we will be thorough and impartial in our review...."

Tri-State is gearing up to build a grassroots campaign for an in-depth study, targeting everything from chambers of

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commerce to the Boy Scouts. Most of Steel Valley, meanwhile, is waiting for the other shoe to drop down at U.S. Steel's Pittsburgh headquarters, a building constructed out of Monongahela Valley steel.

Before the report was released, the Rev. Jesse Jackson came to Duquesne to help drum up support for Dorothy. He got a good crowd despite icy weather, and a rousing reception from the Duquesne high school band. Mayor Zabelsky, however, would have preferred Lee Iacocca.

The Democrat admires pragmatism more than inspiration. "I guess I'm conservative," he said. And he has doubts about revitalizing the Duquesne mill, particularly through eminent domain. He's leaning toward U.S. Steel's industrial park, convinced that filling up an industrial park is a function of the energy you put into it. Zabelsky has sent brochures to some 450 corporations, telling of the advantages of locating in the Mon Valley.

"If you use eminent domain and it doesn't work, it could sit there, and we lose a million a year in taxes," he said. I'd love to see a Japanese steel company or a joint venture buy it. I just want to sit down next to them and make sure my town isn't hurt if it doesn't work.

"But I'm for whatever works," Zabelsky said. "I'm looking to get people to work. If you spend \$150,000 for a feasibility study, I intend to read it."

A few blocks away, in USW Local 1256 union hall, these sorts of doubts have been banished. "For 20 years in that plant we've talked time and again about how we'd run the place if we had the chance," said Mike Bilcsik, the local's president. "This isn't featherbedding. We want to produce steel as efficiently as we can." Bilcsik, a third-generation steelworker, believes that worker-ownership is the answer not only in Duquesne, but that it ought to be a national industrial policy.

The union hall was abuzz with activity. Out front there were signup sheets for the phone tree and for a "support group," which had been called the "women's auxilliary" until some women steelworkers complained. An artist's depiction of Dorothy Six lay on the photocopying machine.

"How can a corporation like U.S. Steel come into the community and destroy a mill if we resist?" Bilcsik said. "They'd need 2,000 cops, especially since the cops would know what we are doing is good for the police, too. They're not going to take this plant out."

Michael Hoyt, a New York writer, reports on labor issues.

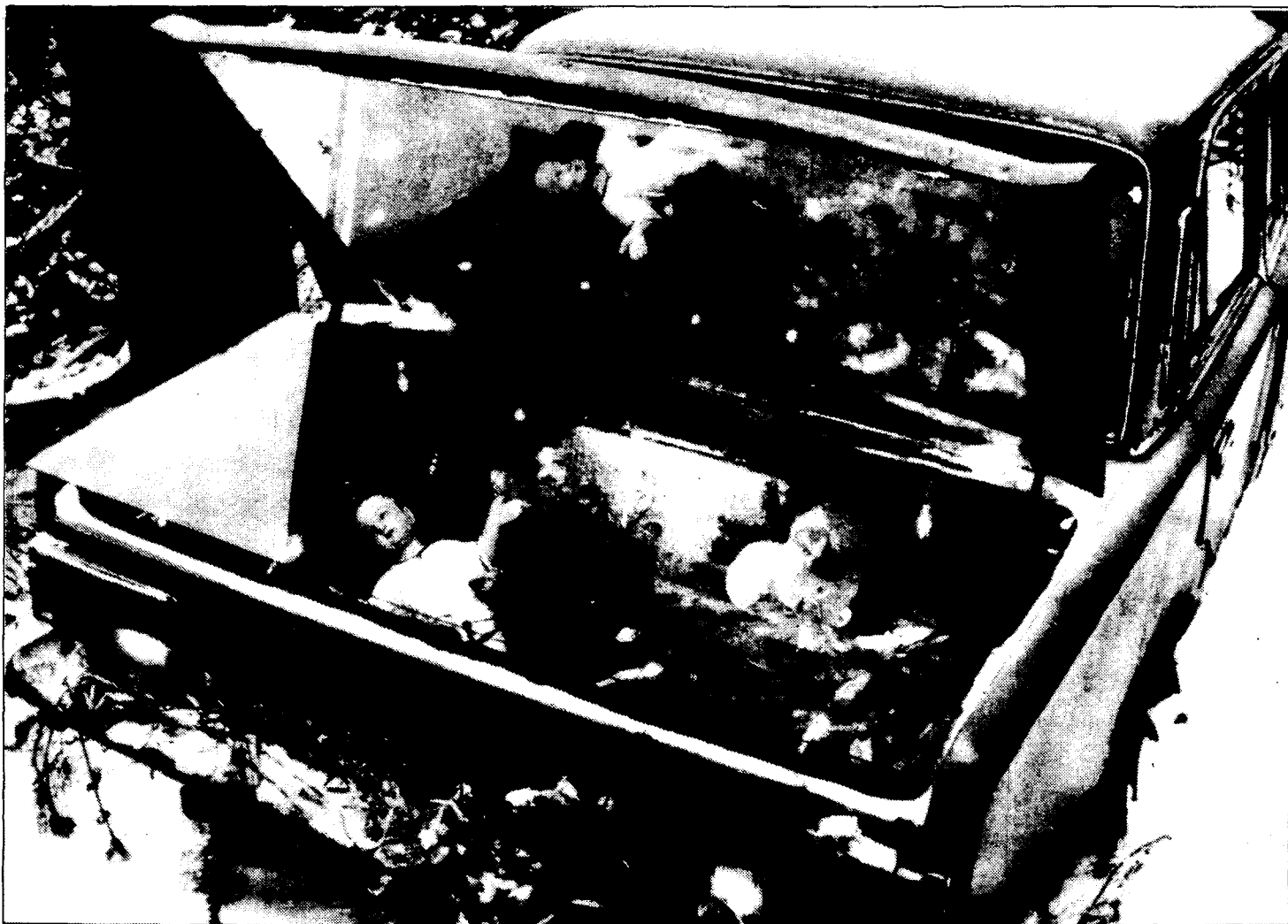


Michael Hoyt

By David Ost

THE TRIAL OF THE SECRET POLICE assassins of Father Jerzy Popieluszko may mark a turning point in the Polish political scene. But this will depend on the responses of four institutions: the government, the police, the Catholic Church and the movement behind Solidarity.

The trial resulted in severe sentences for the defendants, although in Polish society there is widespread suspicion that the four policemen will never serve out their sentences. Police Captain Grzegorz Piotrowski, who had, with no expression of remorse, confessed to actually beating Popieluszko to death, received a 25-year prison sentence, instead of the death pen-



alty officially requested. His immediate superior, a colonel who authorized the crime and sought in vain to cover it up afterward, received the same. The lower-level accomplices received 14 and 15 years.

Although it has been said that this is the first trial of secret policemen in postwar Eastern Europe, that is not the case. In 1957 Hungarian leader Janos Kadar tried several top police lieutenants in a continuation of the purges following the 1956 uprising.

The assassination of Father Popieluszko gives Solidarity its first martyr. The irony is that he was neither an official nor a union member.

Nonetheless, this trial is more important than the Hungarian one, because of the great political unrest still prevailing in Poland. Well aware of this, the government staged the trial as a great media event. Coverage of the proceedings surpassed by far the media's coverage of the "40th anniversary of People's Poland" celebrations last July, which itself was staged as a great national spectacle. During the trial, Warsaw Radio broadcast hourly reports, quoting at length from the testimony. There was no attempt to stop independent confirmation of the media's account, as Catholic priests and Western reporters were allowed into the courtroom in Torun.

The openness stands in marked contrast to last summer's trial of policemen responsible for the death of a high school student in a Warsaw police precinct. At that time the public had to rely exclusively on the media's presentation and no one was surprised when those policemen were acquitted.

That the verdict would be different this

time was apparent from the start. Three of the four defendants readily admitted their guilt, and seemed almost anxious to tell all the gruesome details. The trial, however, provided few real surprises. There was no sudden implication of top-level officials, nor did any of the defendants point to a "foreign" connection, which would have been the real sensation. But then again, the trial was not supposed to produce surprises. The trial was symbolic—intended to de-

monstrate to the public that the government is law-abiding and to the police that it does not run the country on its own.

The one internal shake-up so far took place a week after the crime. Police General Marian Milewski, a rival of Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, was removed from the key post of party secretary in charge of police affairs and replaced by Jaruzelski himself. There may be more changes in the coming months, if Jaruzelski is strong and decisive enough to try to eliminate his rivals who oppose his politics of *rapprochement* with the Catholic Church. It is this policy that has earned him the enmity of the hardliners.

Sense of betrayal.

The trial, though it revealed little else, made this quite clear. Captain Piotrowski emotionally stated the case. He denounced the berated the government for treating its enemies with kid gloves. He accused the government of allowing one priest, who had been sentenced to a long prison term for assisting a group of youth that killed a

A memorial tribute to the slain priest who publicly defended Solidarity.

policeman in early 1982, to be sent in secret from jail to a monastery. (The government vehemently denied the charge.)

Piotrowski described the anger and sense of betrayal he and his colleagues in the secret police department for church affairs felt when Gen. Kiszczak, the minister of internal affairs, forbade them from arresting Father Popieluszko a year ago. He offered a whole litany of "illegal acts" allegedly committed by priests under cover of the church. Then he paused, turned to the tense courtroom filled with policemen, and asked, "How can all this be borne with calm?"

The trial seemed to bring out that there was a motive on the part of the accused: hatred toward the victim, who kept assailing them from the pulpit, and impatience toward the government, which continually stirred up emotions through regular public denunciations of Popieluszko but would not let the police do what they might be expected to do if the accused really were as harmful as they say.

The government had displayed the same mixture of vicious denunciation and lenient punishment against the 11 Solidarity and KOR members, who were accused of crimes such as treason and yet all were released without a trial. Such erratic prosecution has long aroused many in the ruling apparatus, but only now has this opposition become public. The trial only scratched the surface, however. Major internal struggles still lie ahead.

The trial also demonstrated that one institution—the Communist Party—remains remarkably outside the picture. The fact that all four defendants were Party members was probably not important—those jobs require Party membership. What is astonishing, however, is that the regime is also treating this fact as unimportant. Indeed, not a word was mentioned about the Party

at the trial. It seemed an almost irrelevant institution.

This is part of a process that has been going on steadily since the imposition of martial law, aimed at de-emphasizing the Party in favor of the state. The Party has always been merged with the state in Soviet-type societies, but not until now has the state apparatus emerged as the clearly predominant element. The Party is not about to be eliminated, but its ideological character is increasingly de-emphasized to facilitate its transformation into a subversive arm of the state.

Several months ago, for example, a leading pro-Jaruzelski Party publicist called for the introduction of tuition in higher education. The "right to a free education" has always been one of the great claims to power by Communist parties, but this new pragmatic Party is willing to shelve even this. (Right-wing parties in France, incidentally, gleefully picked up this tidbit to use against their own left.)

Church-state *rapprochement*.

The Catholic Church's reaction to recent events has been uneven. On one hand, more young priests seem anxious to continue along the path of Popieluszko. On the other hand, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, head of Poland's Catholic Church, is eager to continue the church-state *rapprochement*, despite the present tense climate. Only weeks after the murder, Glemp issued an order banning another militant priest, Father Stanislaw Malkowski, from speaking his "non-theological polemics" outside of his own parish. What upset Glemp, as well as the government, were words such as those Malkowski spoke just after Popieluszko's abduction: "In the totalitarian empire pretending to be the embodiment of God's power, political authority becomes only a satanic caricature, which no believer will be able to respect... O Save us in the struggle against our rulers... Save us in the struggle which the apocalyptic red dragon wages against God, the church and humanity!" Siding with the government, Glemp has stated that such words are "not patriotic."

The assassination of Father Popieluszko gives Solidarity its first martyr. The irony is that the man was neither an official nor even a member of the union. He did, however, publicly defend Solidarity from the one place where, since martial law, such words are allowed to be publicly spoken: the church. Through its new martyr, Solidarity's secular and democratic struggle becomes intertwined with the church's program more than it ever has before. One possibility is that it now may, like the church, be tempted by a corporatist resolution of the political crisis, allowing for the continuation of the increasingly non-ideological dictatorship in return for the institutionalized participation of the church in the formation of public policy. The trade union problem would be resolved by allowing the formation of Christian trade unions—and idea circulating in Poland ever since the early days of martial law. Solidarity has always been unwilling to go this route, but the influence of its new martyr, which will make it increasingly difficult for the opposition to publicly criticize the church, may make a decisive difference.

The government, meanwhile, continues to show an absolute intolerance toward its social-democratic critics. As the trial verdict was being announced, the government refused entry to former KOR member and Solidarity activist Seweryn Blumsztajn, who ever since the imposition of martial law has been in France organizing support for Solidarity, often in close collaboration with French Socialists and others on the European left. Blumsztajn was seized at the Warsaw airport, his passport was invalidated and then he was forcibly placed back on the same plane to Paris that had just brought him there. It was the first known deportation of a Polish political oppositionist. Blumsztajn's social democratic and Jewish background have always made him anathema to the Polish ruling elite. Clearly, he would not fit into any of the regime's corporatist plans, and they would not allow him to organize any others. ■

David Ost writes regularly about Poland.

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

ON JULY 19, 1972, THE FRENCH prime minister, Pierre Messmer, addressed a letter to his state secretary in charge of overseas departments and territories instructing him to take all necessary measures to seize the "last chance to create another French-speaking country" in "the last tropical territory in the world to which a developed country can make its citizens emigrate."

This territory was the island of New Caledonia some 850 miles east of Australia in the South Pacific. It had been a French possession since 1853. But Messmer's point was that it needed more French people.

"The French presence in New Caledonia cannot be threatened outside of world war except by a nationalist claim on the part of the indigenous populations, supported by eventual allies in other Pacific ethnic communities," wrote Messmer.

"In the short and medium term, massive immigration of French citizens from France itself or from overseas departments should head off this danger.... In the long term, the indigenous nationalist claim will be avoided only if the non-Pacific communities are in the majority." This requires "systematic immigration of women and children," the prime minister pointed out. Indeed, to encourage the feminine presence needed to increase the French population, Messmer recommended that "every job which can be occupied by a woman be reserved for a woman."

President Georges Pompidou's prime minister predicted that in 20 years New Caledonia could be "a prosperous little French territory comparable to Luxembourg, obviously representing, in the emptiness of the Pacific, much more than Luxembourg does in Europe."

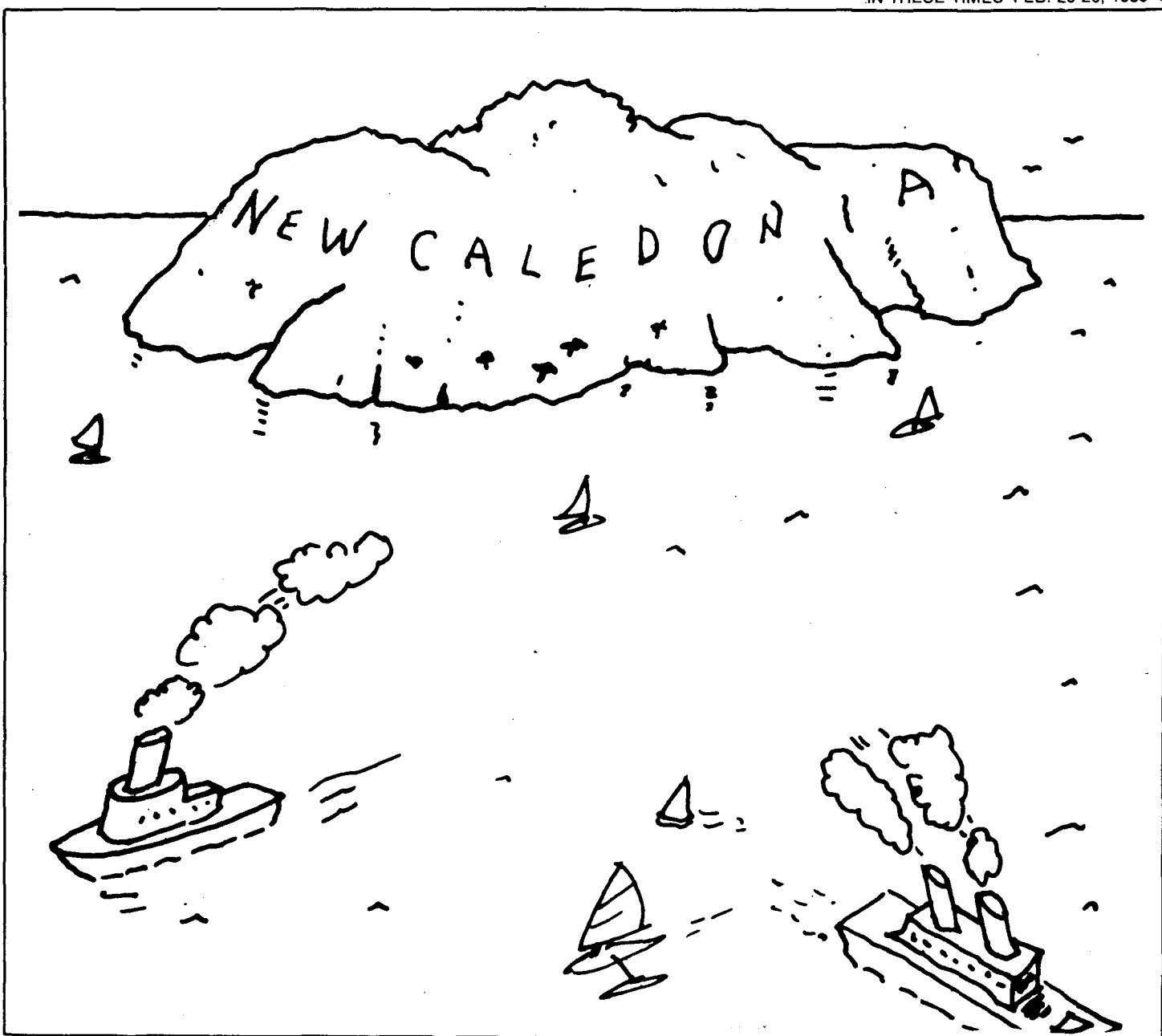
But, Messmer warned, the success of "this indispensable enterprise for maintaining French positions East of Suez" depends "on our ability to succeed at long last, after so many failures in our history, an operation of overseas settlement."

French colonialism has always suffered, compared to that of Britain, from French people's unwillingness to leave France. The French administration got some French settlers to New Caledonia by making it a penal colony from 1864 to 1896. Most of the "Caldoches," as old-time white settlers are called, are descendants of penal deportees. After the 1871 Paris Commune, leading Communards including Louise Michel were exiled to New Caledonia, but returned to France as soon as they could.

French interests in New Caledonia are so considerable that no government would give them up. The island holds one-fourth of the world's nickel.

In the 20th century, the French administration filled out the "French" population with forced deportation from Vietnam and encouraged immigration from other French territories in India, Asia and Africa. The unifying factor in the racial melting pot was a sense of superiority of all newcomers toward the island's original Melanesian inhabitants, the Kanaks.

Messmer's 1972 instruction violated United Nations resolution 1514, which was adopted in 1960 and committed member states to "discourage or prevent" systematic immigration into colonial territories that might upset the composition of the population so as to obstruct genuine self-determination. In fact, Pompidou's government



NEW CALEDONIA

France's island in the South Pacific

was deliberately engaged in a race against the awakening consciousness of the Kanak people, at a time when all the other South Pacific territories (except those held by the U.S.) were moving toward independence. In the '70s, encouraged first by Christian missionaries and then by May '68, a new generation of Kanaks was beginning to demand the land that had been stolen from them by colonialism.

The Kanaks have a double claim on the land, real and symbolic. In real terms, they want back the farming or grazing land that was taken away from them and given to white settlers when they were forced into reservations on the hillsides, where the poor cropland is further damaged by sludge from the open pit nickel mines along the island's long mountain ridge. This is by no means an impossible or even difficult demand. The non-Kanak farming population numbers less than 900 people, and the French government is willing to compensate them for their land loss. The Europeans who live in the "bush" are not so much farmers as small tradesmen. Their main production, according to some critics, is Melanesian alcoholism. Liquor sales boom in the bush.

The symbolic claim on the land involves revival of the Melanesian "custom," the traditional way of organizing social life among people who were mobile on their island. The custom stressed the priority of the original inhabitants of an area in welcoming and organizing the newcomers. The Kanaks, in demanding national independence, are first of all demanding recognition of their special relationship to the land as the original inhabitants. A slogan of the *Front Indépendantiste* expressed this idea: "Recognize the Kanak people so that they can recognize you in turn."

This is apparently too subtle for the Cartesian reasoning of most Caldoches, who can only imagine demanding a right in order to take it away from somebody else.

In 1979, the French Socialist Party issued a joint statement with the Kanak *Front Indépendantiste* endorsing "the Kanak people's just demand for independence" and promising to support and guarantee "the Kanak people's right to decide their own future." The statement was signed by

Francois Mitterrand.

This statement encouraged the Kanaks. When Mitterrand was elected, they rejoiced that independence was on the way. But the Socialists took three years to get around to the Caledonian problem. Meanwhile, the anti-Kanak backlash was mounting—and arming.

At the time of the last census in April 1983, the population of New Caledonia was 154,368, including 61,870 Melanesians—that is, only 42 percent. The French population policy has had some success. The percentage of Melanesians in 1921 was 57 percent, 52 percent in 1951, 48 percent in 1963.

The Socialists promised to let "the Kanak people" decide their future. But last June, when they finally voted a new transitional statute, they gave the vote to every French citizen who had been a resident of New Caledonia for three years.

At that time the only Kanak in the French National Assembly, Roch Pidjot, resigned from the Socialist Party group in protest. The Kanaks demanded that only New Caledonians whose mother or father had been born there be allowed to vote. They also objected to the Socialist statute's postponement of a final referendum on the island's future until 1989—plenty of time for the right to stack the island with anti-Kanak voters and to return to office in Paris.

Too late and too little, the Socialist reform was a fiasco. The Kanaks reacted by forming a Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) and a "provisional government," while boycotting elections held last Nov. 18. Only half the electorate voted. The neo-Gaullists of Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac's party (RPR) won 34 of the 42 seats in the territorial assembly. An anti-independence Kanak, Dick Ukeiwe, presides over the territorial government. The capital city of Noumea, where most of the non-Kanak population is concentrated,

is an increasingly militant stronghold of the right and even the extreme right.

The Kanaks are accused of being racist and undemocratic for rejecting the principle of "one person, one vote." At the beginning of the century, Caldoches would still sometimes hunt Kanaks for sport. The Kanaks are afraid of the Caldoches, who have the "poor white" racist attitudes and cult of firearms characteristic of colonial settlers all over the world.

The Kanaks have maybe a total of 6,000 rifles by their own admission, while the Caldoches, their ranks swelled by bitter veterans of France's lost colonial wars in Algeria and Vietnam and other "soldiers of fortune," are building up their arsenals from the well-supplied U.S. Army surplus arms market in the Philippines. Some Kanak leaders evidently hope to precipitate a crisis in order to get a solution while the left is still in power in Paris. Shootings of Kanaks have alternated with raids on Caldoche farms in the bush intended to drive the white settlers off the land.

After World War II, a didactic but enormously successful Broadway musical called *South Pacific* used the example of a tolerant French colonial settler to try to teach the American public that racism was not appropriate to the global role the U.S. was taking on. Relations between French settlers and Melanesians are certainly not as idyllic as they appeared on the Broadway stage. On the other hand, there has long been an elite of enlightened French public servants who have tried to combine French imperial interests with universal values and human rights.

The Pisani Plan.

A man of this stripe is Edgar Pisani, a former minister of agriculture under de Gaulle who has written with sensitivity of Third World development problems. Last

Continued on following page

Continued from preceding page

December 1, Mitterrand sent Pisani to Noumea to shoot down the troubles popping up in New Caledonia. On January 7, Pisani unveiled his own plan to speed up the process of transition to "independence associated with France."

The Pisani Plan, which should be subject to referendum in the summer, would make New Caledonia a sovereign state with membership in the United Nations. This sovereign state would be linked to France by a treaty of "association" giving France "full responsibility for the new state's defense and for public security on its territory." French citizens who wanted to keep their citizenship would be given the status of "privileged residents" and allowed to help run Noumea.

This is a classic neo-colonialist formula for preserving essential French interests, in the pure Gaullist tradition. But the neo-Gaullists have hotly opposed it, no doubt because they see Mitterrand's authority wobbling, and New Caledonia looks like an excellent emotional issue to help push it over.

By prevailing standards, French interests in New Caledonia are so considerable that no government would give them up. The island contains one-fourth of world reserves of nickel (44 percent of land-based reserves) and makes France the world's third nickel producer after the USSR and Canada. Since 1937, Caledonian nickel mining has been monopolized by *société le nickel* (SLN, "the nickel company"), a Rothschild subsidiary. The Pompidou government took measures to keep out American mining companies. But the market declined in the mid-'70s, whereupon the state-owned oil company ELF-ERAP was obliged to bail out Rothschild by taking over control of SLN. Although now in a slump, Caledonia nickel is considered a sure future money-maker.

Besides that, New Caledonia's territorial waters are a treasure trove for two major economic activities of the future, sea farming and seabed mining of polymetallic

nodules. Seabed mining is scheduled to get underway in 1988, and France is one of the few countries technologically prepared. Its Melanesian and Polynesian possessions give France claim to more than seven million square kilometers of South Pacific territorial waters.

France's nuclear testing center in Polynesia is essential to keeping up the *force de frappe* and France's role as nuclear power. French strategists fear that all this could collapse in a "domino effect" if New Caledonia got away.

In the French political class, it is axiomatic that if France let the territory go, someone else would snap it up. The politically acceptable way to express this is to warn darkly of Soviet expansionist designs. In fact, the USSR is absent from the South Pacific. Others would get there first.

"Given the prospects for the Pacific, a great power like the U.S., either directly or through Australia, could not for long leave such a strategic position and economic wealth exposed to hostile influence," right-wing Gaullist Michel Debré wrote recently in *Le Figaro*.

Spheres of influence.

French political leaders are convinced to the point of panic that the center of civilization has been moving from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic to the Pacific, and France must follow or be left out. France's one-woman equivalent of the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, Marie-France Garaud (President Pompidou's closest confidante when Messmer was inciting French settlement in New Caledonia) has been emphasizing the geostrategic importance of the Pacific at her exclusive colloquiums attended by top Socialists.

Australia's support to the Kanaks is regarded by French leaders as particularly suspect and hypocritical. In mid-December, President Mitterrand nearly caused a diplomatic incident by saying in the course of a television interview that Australia was in no position to talk, since it

had got rid of *its* native problem by massacring the natives.

Australian and New Zealander protests against French nuclear tests in the Pacific are also interpreted in Paris as moves to widen their own spheres of influence in the region.

In as much as the U.S. runs Pacific nuclear tests and never even considers giving up its Pacific territories, the U.S. seems, for the time being, France's best political support in the region. But in the long run the U.S. attitude is uncertain, as leader of ANZU or of (the most frightening specter) a Japanese-American condominium around the Pacific basin. The French watched with discreet alarm as the Reagan administration encouraged Japanese Prime Minister Yashiro Nakasone to tour the region in January advocating a "Pacific Community."

The far right plays on such fears by vowing to get Reagan to save them from "the Communists" if the Socialist government gives in to Kanak demands. A rightist group announced in January it had written to Reagan asking him to accept the island as the 51st state in the union with the name "New California."

When the Kanaks try such practical jokes, the laughing stops. The FLNKS "defense minister," former school teacher Eloi Machoro, went to Libya to seek support. FLNKS President Jean-Marie Tjibaou, a former priest, explained later that this "wasn't very serious, it was above all an illusion to get things moving" by arousing the interest of Australians, New Zealanders and others who immediately acted to head off the "Libyan threat" by backing the Kanaks themselves.

On January 12 Machoro and another FLNKS leader were shot dead on a farm in the bush in disputed circumstances. The Pisani Plan then came under hostile attack from both sides that could tear away the tactful concessions to Kanak feelings and leave the underlying relationship of forces brutally exposed.

A week later, Mitterrand flew to New Caledonia for a lightning visit and came back with a five-point statement making no mention of "independence-association." He announced that "France means to maintain its role and strategic presence in that part of the world" and to that end was going to reinforce its military base at Noumea. *Le Monde* commented that this meant heavy investments to give France a modern military base capable of ensuring the permanent presence of large air and naval forces. The port would be able to welcome the U.S. Seventh Fleet in Noumea.

This seems a move to ensure American support at a time when the ANZUS allies, Australia and New Zealand, are objecting to letting American ships with nuclear weapons into their ports. *Le Monde* reported that the French defense ministry had been studying the model of U.S. Guantanamo base in Cuba just in case.

Kanak leaders were unenthusiastic at the prospect of "military men all over the place." There are already 6,000 French soldiers and policemen in New Caledonia—about one for every 10 Kanaks. Kanaks

complain that in the current state of emergency, repression is directed against them and not against the "fascist bands" of armed Caldoches egged on by the far right.

"The only weapon they have now is the fear they can inspire in the Caldoches," a sympathetic French ethnologist said of the Kanaks recently. "But that weapon can be turned against themselves. For in fleeing the bush to take refuge in Noumea, the Europeans are going to constitute a strike force for some rightist elements quite determined to prevent independence."

In Paris, Chirac's city council last month voted 100,000 francs for "domestic refugees" in New Caledonia over strong protests from the left minority. Socialist Georges Sarre objected to using Paris funds to subsidize right-wing groups of Caldoches.

Rightist leader Jean-Marie Le Pen had an overflow crowd of some 5,000 at his Paris rally on New Caledonia under the Reaganite slogan "France is back." Speakers accused the Socialists of wanting to give France's colonies to the Soviet bloc. The first (and only) Melanesian to join his Nationalist Front, Francois Noéré, denied that Le Pen was racist. "Le Pen is the providential man of our time, and—why not?—sent from heaven like Joan of Arc."

FLNKS President Jean-Marie Tjibaou flew to Paris to plead his cause, after a stop in Australia where he was encouraged by Foreign Minister Bill Hayden and Labor Prime Minister Bob Hawke. Tjibaou had no experience with the media, and French journalists did little to help him get across the reasonableness of his position, preferring to pounce on any phrase that could be interpreted as intransigence. "My image is not salable. At least not on your market," Tjibaou concluded in an interview in *Liberation*.

Following Le Pen in the same hall, Tjibaou also had a crowd at his rally. But sponsored by the Communist Party and the far left, it was more marginal than he had hoped. Much of the audience was African or West Indian. The Trotskyist militants chanted slogans in the same old style—"Mitterrand assassin!"—that clashed painfully with Tjibaou's heartfelt plea to the French to "have pity on the Kanak people."

There is an understanding between Tjibaou and Pisani that could serve as basis for a face-saving compromise. But it may not survive the attacks from the right and Mitterrand's lukewarm support. After his trip to New Caledonia, Mitterrand instructed Pisani to "complete" his plan, giving "indispensable guarantees to the various communities"—a clear backing off from conceding Kanak privileges as original host community.

Historian Jean Chesneaux points to three ways to view the South Pacific: as an exotic cultural paradise for anthropologists and tourists, as a vital geostrategic zone, or as an area to try out "alternative forms of development" combining ecological concerns, an updated traditional wisdom and appropriate technologies. Clearly, Mitterrand has opted for the geostrategic approach.

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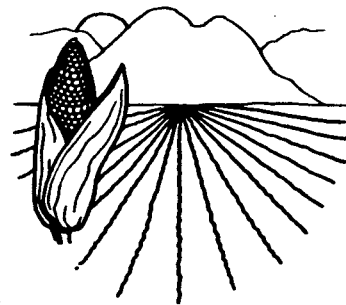
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By Jeremy Harding

LONDON

THE SMALL TOWN OF DEAL IS SITUATED in Kent, on the southeast coast of England, about a 50-mile drive from London. Owned and run by the local branch of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the Miners' Welfare Club in Deal has been packed for the past 11 months with striking miners and their relatives. They come to the club to discuss the strike and exchange accounts of the pressures it has put on all members of this small mining area consisting of three collieries, which are isolated from Britain's larger coalfields in Wales, Scotland and the north of England.

Visitors to the club are welcome, although an air of reticence toward journalists testifies to a sentiment, general throughout the striking areas, that the mass media in Britain have not given the NUM a fair hearing. In Deal and elsewhere, press coverage of the dispute is only one element, as miners see it, in an array of adversary forces ranged against them, including:

- intransigent management in the form of the new-look National Coal Board (NCB) under the chairmanship of Ian MacGregor, a Thatcher appointee with hard-nosed notions of maximizing profits in an industry nationalized in 1947;

- a partisan police force and a judiciary ready to award in favor of miners who oppose their union's policy by means of the law;

- a social security system with exclusionary policies on welfare entitlements for striking miners' families; and

- an administration determined to erode the dwindling strengths of the British labor movement, which is already in retreat.

Strikers believe that their union has borne the brunt of Margaret Thatcher's war of attrition and currently stands in the vanguard of British labor. They believe they're taking the thrust of the new conservatism full in the face, as they struggle to protect their jobs. They believe they deserve unqualified support.

The miners' strike was called in March of last year in response to a demand by the NCB that five pits in Britain's coalfields close, and that industry capacity be reduced by four million tons, which meant closing another 20 pits and the loss of 20,000 jobs.

When the NUM's National Executive, headed by NUM President Arthur Scargill, called the miners out, it had little reason to hope for immediate backing from organized labor. The "new realism" of the 1983 Trade Union Congress, which acknowledged the difficulties faced by the unions and advocated caution, had set the tone for overall policy in Thatcher's second term. But it remained possible for the Executive to believe that if the strike were protracted, it might operate as a rallying point for unions, who would in the end feel obliged to come to the aid of a beleaguered labor constituency fighting for its existence.

And yet, almost a year later, with the strike considerably weakened, the member unions of the Trade Union Congress have failed to deliver on strong supportive statements it made last fall. The Labor Party leadership has officially distanced itself from the NUM. And the stirrings of rank-and-file support from certain sectors of British labor have been unable to find the kind of institutional expression that, in a different political climate, might have brought the dispute to a swift resolution.

"A scab is a traitor."

The notice board of the Deal Miners' Welfare Club, set back of a large room between the bar and the pool table, carries xeroxed photographs of miners who have crossed picket lines, collecting the handsome bonuses held out by the NCB before the end of last year. The photos are captioned with a quotation from Jack London that every striking miner must now know by heart: "After God had made the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which he made a scab.... A scab is a traitor to his wife, his



Lesley Boulton, of Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures, attacked by South Yorkshire police in June 1984.

country, his family and his class."

The trauma of this strike, which has bitterly divided the national union, is evident in the Kent coalfield. Traditionally a militant area—a group of Kent men criticized Scargill for insufficient activity in 1981—Kent was able to field pickets nationwide in previous disputes with no worries about the solidity of feeling at home. But the Kent area of the NUM has now seen some 150 members out of 2,300 cross picket lines. Like many features of this strike, the breach in solidarity is a new phenomenon in Kent.

MacGibbons, who spoke at the Conservative Party Conference last year against the strike. Her husband, a working miner, has a history of anti-union activity dating back to 1974.

Levels of policing are also unprecedented in Kent. A high-profile local constabulary, bolstered by a hybrid of forces from other parts of Britain, has transformed the community's view of police and policing. Arbitrary arrest, victimization and provocation are common accusations made against the police by Kent miners, many

BRITAIN

Striking miners face splits and hostility

Betteshanger Colliery Branch Chairman John Moyle—who has argued for the strike to audiences in Washington, D.C., and Chicago—believes that the financial and ideological involvement of right-wing groups with working miners has placed a major burden on traditional union loyalties in Kent. Kent Strike Coordinating Committee Chairman Terry Birkett has received several reports of his members being approached with offers of up to £250 in cash to return to work. The back-to-work movement in Kent has crystalized around Irene

of whom have court cases pending, following arrest on the picket lines. Bail conditions and suspended sentences make stringent provision against any return to the picket lines and in this way, many argue, the union presence around colliery gates is kept deliberately low.

Birkett comments that where intimidation by strikers against working miners has occurred, police action has savored of random reprisal, with charges frequently brought against innocent parties. Nationwide, more than 8,000 arrests have been

When the miners left the mines, the union leadership believed a protracted strike might act as a rallying point for others, who in the end would feel obliged to aid a beleaguered labor constituency fighting for its existence. Almost a year later, these expectations have remained unfulfilled.

made in the course of the dispute and more than 7,000 of these have led to convictions.

Kent pickets had a taste of the new style of national policing early on in the strike when road blocks were set up near London and militants were prevented from traveling north to join picket lines. The British National Council for Civil Liberties, which also defends the right of dissident miners to cross picket lines, has likened police roadblock tactics to "the Soviet internal passport system or South African pass laws." Parts of Yorkshire have seen relatively good relations between pickets and police, who have kept in touch with area unions in order to minimize tensions.

But elsewhere the picture is very different. The deployment of police from regional forces to all areas involved in the dispute has generated fears that there is now a *de facto* national police force operating in Britain.

Beyond the many accounts of ill treatment and provocation by police—including the waving of wage packets in front of impoverished strikers—TV news coverage of the strike has shown scenes of violence on both sides. Strikers respond to the charge that they have intimidated working miners with a range of arguments. The union and its loyalist membership, they claim, have been the objects of intimidation themselves—by the NCB, the police, the courts and the government.

In some cases, the use of the term intimidation is more figurative than literal. In others, it is not. Last August, in the South Yorkshire village of Armthorpe, 52 transit vans spilled out a large contingent of police in riot gear. The village was sealed off and the police went into action for several hours, hauling men and women out of houses, pursuing residents and pickets through the streets and administering the kind of justice that has become unnervingly familiar over the past 11 months. With the village under curfew, no ambulances were allowed in to tend the injured.

Episodes like this spotlight the worst-case situations mining communities have faced since last March. They also make the violence of the pickets, which Arthur Scargill has consistently refused to condemn, much more intelligible. Terry Birkett and the men in Kent have nothing favorable to say of the police. And the women of the Kent Miners' Wives Support Committee endorse their sons and husbands' views. A spokeswoman from the committee told *In These Times* that the damage done to relations between the police and the community was irreparable.

Women's role.

The women who support the strikers are present in large numbers on the picket lines, have raised funds around the country and have spoken eloquently on public platforms. They have also organized soup kitchens at home and have budgeted for family and friends on low welfare allowances—the result of a £16 per week deduction in welfare for strikers' families, leaving some of them as little as £6 per week to spend on food.

For the women in Kent, this kind of hardship is preferable to a life on the economic margins, foreseeable under MacGregor's closure plan. One Support Committee member told *In These Times* that the overall effects of such a program would knock £20 million out of the local economy, with drastic consequences for the community. "We're ordinary people," she said. "We only believe in the right to work."

This style of persuasive argument has been well received by women elsewhere in Britain. Networks of women outside the pit communities have made contact with miners' families and, in the first two weeks of February alone, a national grouping of Women Against Pit Closures raised £70,000 in support of the strikers.

But it is the activity and tenacity of women within the communities that has given so much solidity to the strike. Whatever the outcome of the dispute, its effect on women is unlikely to disappear. As one woman from South Wales remarked,

Continued on page 22

By James Weinstein

ALEX AMERSON IS THE PSEUDONYM of a Soviet socialist exile who has been in the U.S. eight years. He is Jewish and the son of an accountant who became the manager of the syndicate of restaurants and public eating places of a middle-sized Ukrainian city. Alex went to school there and in 1970 graduated with a gold medal after completing the equivalent of high school.

By that time, he had already been politically active. Political activity, he says, "starts when somebody in authority starts paying attention to you." In Alex's case, it started at the age of 14, when he wrote a letter to Leonid Brezhnev "saying I disagreed with his internal and foreign policies and I would like an appointment to explain my position."

Instead of sending an invitation for an appointment, Brezhnev sent a KGB agent from Moscow. "The only thing he did," Alex says, "was to make my mother cry. He didn't talk to me, but he did open a file in the KGB office. Ever since, I have had special attention from the organs of state safety of the Soviet Union."

Special attention meant that from time to time an agent would drop by to see how Alex felt or if he needed any help. For three years they hardly bothered him at all, but in his last year of high school Amersov helped found his "first organization," a group of about six fellow students who started publishing and distributing leaflets.

It wasn't easy as they had no direct access to paper or printing apparatus. Buying large quantities of paper was out, because doing so "can cause suspicion in the eyes of the clerk, and often that suspicion will be relayed to the KGB or the police." But there wasn't a need for large quantities of paper, anyway, because the printing was done on typewriters with "maybe four, five, six copies at a time and heavy hitting." In addition, typewriters couldn't be bought because typewriters in stores were registered and the print from each placed with the police. So at first a stolen typewriter was used, and when that had to be dumped in the river after the police got suspicious, typewriters in a typing class were used when the instructor wasn't looking.

That is how one dissident's career began. After having been caught twice by the KGB and told that he had to stop publishing illegal writings or be sent to Siberia, Amersov came to the U.S. Now he is anxious to make sense of that experience in the light of his eight years here. In the following interview, he discusses his experience and his view of Soviet society.

What did you write about in those first leaflets?

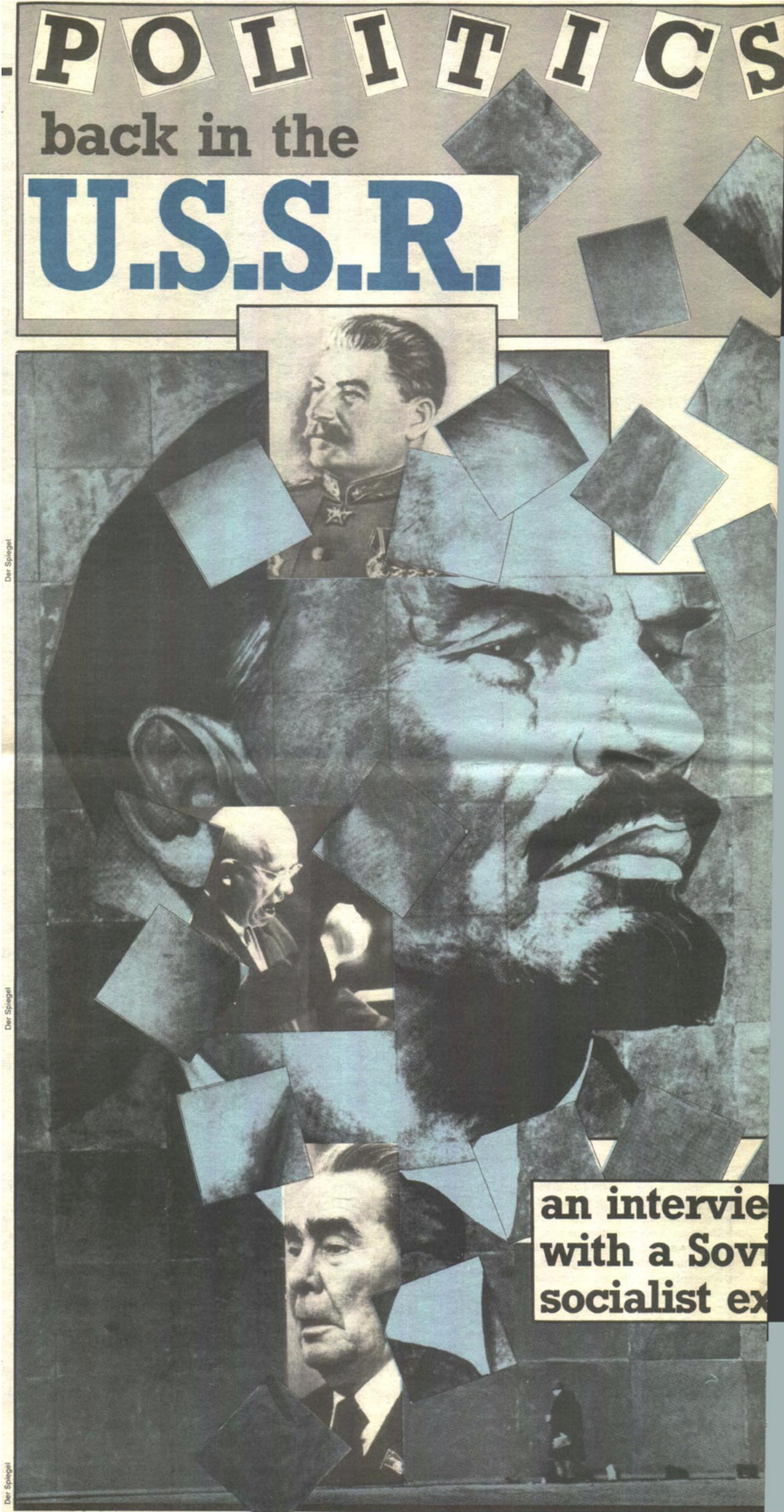
We started by distributing the words of the Soviet anthem. It seemed to us teenagers to be really perverse that such a great country did not have words to the anthem, which was played all the time.

You mean the national anthem has no words?

Oh, there are words, but for about 15 years they have officially been banned because there is a line referring to Stalin.

So you thought Stalin was good?

Sure. The vast majority of Soviets then saw Stalin's time as a time of greatness. People knew those times had been severe, and that many suffered, but the arbitrariness fell mostly on people in the party hierarchy. Seeing oppression not only at the bottom, but also at the very top, people thought it fair. They considered it to be a specific difficulty in building communism. In 1969, we in the Ukraine were under the influence of a general nostalgia for Stalin. We were then very different from the dissidents in Moscow. Like Trotskyists now—or Stalinists now—we thought there had been some kind of deviation from the true path of the revolution. Life as we knew it was not fair. Under Stalin, we thought, it had



an interview
with a Soviet
socialist ex

been rough but fair.

How did these views of yours change?

With the study of Soviet history—and by looking at it from a different perspective, from the perspective of what are the economic and social roots of the problems. It was a gradual process of coming to emphasize more the need for democracy over the need for a just and fair dictatorship. Gradually we came to understand the need to have people decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. So from trying to reestablish society in the proper way, we came to understand the need to reestablish democracy.

When you say reestablish democracy, you mean that there had been democracy?

At the time we thought there had been—in the '20s and '30s, with the exhilaration of building a new society and the commitment of hundreds of millions of people to this cause. We hoped to recreate the conditions that led to such commitment—conditions where everyone could speak freely.

You have to remember that's how our awakening teenage minds perceived the situation. Political involvement for the vast majority of people starts that way, I think—with the idealization of the past.

How did your change in understanding affect your activities?

A year or two after our first organization fell apart I was in an institution of higher learning in a larger city. The atmosphere there was different and there was more of an attempt to understand the fundamentals of our society.

On whose part?

On the part of a large number of my fellow university students, most from the technical and natural science areas, but also from philology and history. And by the time our group was fully organized—it took about a year—there were even some students from seminaries, religious students. And there were some young workers.

It was easy to meet people interested in politics, because the Soviet Union is different from the U.S. in this respect. In the U.S. the vast majority of society is apolitical. You have to look for a person who is politically motivated, but in the Soviet Union a large proportion of people are interested in politics, it is the number-one subject in any discussion.

Even though the people of the Soviet Union have no political autonomy?

Well, they don't have it in the United States—I don't understand the concept of political autonomy.

Well, in the U.S. anyone who has a political point of view that differs from the official view is free to express it. At the very least all Americans have formal political freedom.

True, but in the U.S., if I ride on a train or go to a restaurant, no one is interested in talking about politics. If you try, they look at you like you're crazy. So, despite the formal freedom, people are generally apolitical and it is difficult to engage others in political discussion.

On the other hand, in the Soviet Union, you can stand in a line, go on a train, sit in a restaurant and the first thing people talk to each other about is politics—what is Brezhnev doing, who in the government is doing this or that, how are food prices going, or was there a riot or a demonstration or some protest. Where are the dissidents, and so on.

About riots and demonstrations?

About all aspects of political and social life. If you are on a train and you walk to the back of the car for a smoke, there will always be a group of four or five, or ten, talking about politics and sports—and, in fact, the talk about sports is often just a way to get into politics.

Furthermore, in the U.S., for a person to become an active opponent of the system requires a long process of alienation, but in the Soviet Union, to place yourself in a position in opposition to the system very

often is just a matter of strengthening the ties with other people.

You mean the confidence that they can talk to others freely?

No, not so much confidence, but to share the interests and needs of other people.

Then you would have hundreds or thousands of little groups in the Soviet Union discussing politics and in some ways dissident.

Not hundreds or thousands, but hundreds of thousands would be correct—hundreds of thousands of small, independent networks or groups where people get together and express their opinions about all of political and social life—that is normal life in the Soviet Union.

Does that ever find any larger expression?

No, but the KGB can't clamp down on the small groups, because they are based on family and friends and are very extensive. In my family, for example, when they get together for a holiday, they talk almost entirely about politics. This is a different sort of politics, not like the U.S. where there are many more formal opportunities.

Is there any way these people's ideas get fed into the government?

Sure, when there are lots of Party members in those circles. The system doesn't respond much to individual protests, which is the main form of protest in the Soviet Union, but these groups do create a social opinion about one subject or another, to which the party cannot help but react. When the 16 million Party members interact with these groups of friends and relatives they cannot help but adopt to one degree or another the mentality, or political thinking of these circles. They bring that back to their party organization, and these ideas work their way up the hierarchy.

Does the party systematically try to find out what popular opinion is on particular issues?

Yes, but it is becoming more difficult because there is an increasing breakdown of social cohesiveness in Soviet society. So now they are more and more resorting to formal public-opinion polls.

O.K., let's discuss the nature and extent of freedom here and in the Soviet Union.

In the United States, restrictions on freedom are imposed by the realities of economic life, while in the Soviet Union they are imposed by the state. Soviet dissidents can operate and function relatively easily because their housing is assured, health care is free, it's easy to get a job and they need relatively little to live on—a dissident can live on \$30-40 a month. So they do not have nearly as many problems as a person who enters politics in the U.S. The average American participates in politics only by giving contributions or voting every four years. Indirect participation.

Soviet dissidents do not have nearly as many financial problems as the average person who would like to enter U.S. politics.

I assume you're talking about Americans who might want to run for Congress or a state legislature, who are constrained by needing a great deal of money, connections and a range of resources that the average person doesn't have—including the free time to devote to politics. Free time is the most important.

But in the U.S. it's possible to do it.

Sure. But in both societies there is a ruling class, a class of people that is involved full time in political life or in making the political and economic decisions in society.

In this country, though, the people who are engaged in political life as a class, or as a group, are not a class in the same sense as in the Soviet Union. People who are engaged in political life here are not the rulers of this country, although they are in many ways a buffer between the general population and the interests that they serve once they get into office. But in the Soviet Union there is an identity between those people who are actually running the government and who control society. There is no owning class, no capitalist class that finances them and that, if it doesn't like them, can use the media to get rid of them.

Yes, in the Soviet Union those who control the state are also the economically dominant class. But local Party members in the Soviet Union also do not see themselves as members of a ruling class.

Russia has its own particular political and cultural traditions and methods of government that come directly out of the previously existing society—out of czarist Russia.

That means dissent has always been difficult. But today, it's much harder to be a dissident in the Soviet Union than 10 years ago, because of the immediate charge of treason as a result of the Cold War revival. There was a different situation under detente. Then the charge of treason was hard to make stick, though the state always tried. In short, the degree of freedom an individual is allowed in any society depends to a large degree on things other than whether one is "socialist" and the other capitalist.

No Russian government ever could govern without keeping the borders closed. That's a fundamental fact of all czarist Russia and all Soviet history. The entire history of Russia is the history of cruelty, both by foreign invaders and by rulers of the society.

Given that, what would you say is the situation in the Soviet Union in the last 20 years compared to the rest of its history? Well, there's one process that is going on and that will continue until the rule of the Party is abolished. That is the continuous

"The degree of freedom an individual is allowed in any society depends to a large degree on things other than whether one is 'socialist' and the other 'capitalist'."

dispersal of economic power and of economic initiative, from the party to individual enterprises and, to a lesser degree, to individual citizens.

I do not see any possibility that today's oligarchy will resort to the same type of "cleansing" measures such as were used under Stalin. Today, the powers of the state and of the party are constrained to a large degree by the things it's done in the past. Every new enterprise established becomes an extra chain around the oligarchy's legs. And the slowing down of the rate of growth in recent years indicates that the Party is less and less able to direct society at will.

Soviet Jews & dissidents

In our original group of high school students, about half of the six or eight of us were Jews, but being Jewish was not a question at the time. In general, the dissident movement and the Jewish movement are sharply differentiated. The dissidents are a general democratic movement. They supported the right of Jews to emigrate from the Soviet Union. But very few members of the Jewish movement participated in the general democratic movement, and the Jewish movement always remained opportunistic. Their main concern was getting out, though a smaller group tried to establish conditions for Jewish identity in the Soviet Union.

I recently saw a copy of Soviet Life with an article on Birobijan and on the Yiddish language and Yiddish theater in that autonomous region. How do Soviet Jews relate to that?

The majority of Jews pay no attention to Birobijan. It was established as a homeland for Jews, but the majority of people now living there are not Jewish. Most Jews do not want to live there and many don't know it exists. Who would want to leave Moscow, or any other major city, and go to live at the end of Asia?

It's similar with American Jews and Israel. American Jews support Israel, but not many want to go there to live. In my group the three of four of us who were Jewish were simply interested in reviving patriotism and commitment to a better future for the country. In fact, we only wanted to reestablish the type of society that existed under Stalin. Well, only children can think that way. Actually, we were lucky. Under Brezhnev we were simply invited for a conversation with someone from the KGB. Under Stalin, especially the Jews among us, might simply have been carted off to Siberia.

By Jerry F. Hough

IN THE WEEKS BEFORE THE GENEVA meeting between George P. Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, we heard a great deal about competing factions in the administration in Washington. But what about factions in Moscow? Might they be relevant to arms control negotiations?

Experts argue that it is all but impossible intelligently to decipher the internal politics of the Kremlin. But a plausible assessment of the political debate in Moscow and its importance for the U.S. is possible.

Two basic problems have bedeviled the analysis of Soviet politics in recent years. First, we have failed to understand the driving forces and foreign policy imperatives of economic reform—the central subject of debate on the Soviet political agenda. Second, we have erred by characterizing the Soviet foreign policy debate as “detente vs. anti-detente.” In fact, there are at least three basically pro-detente positions in Moscow. By failing to distinguish between them, analysts have confused the alignments on Soviet-American relations.

Soviet leadership today is divided between conservatives, usually of the older generation, who are afraid of change and—in many cases—eager to make peace with the U.S. to avoid internal reforms; and others, mostly younger men, who are themselves divided on many foreign policy issues, but united in their desire to remake the Soviet economic system.

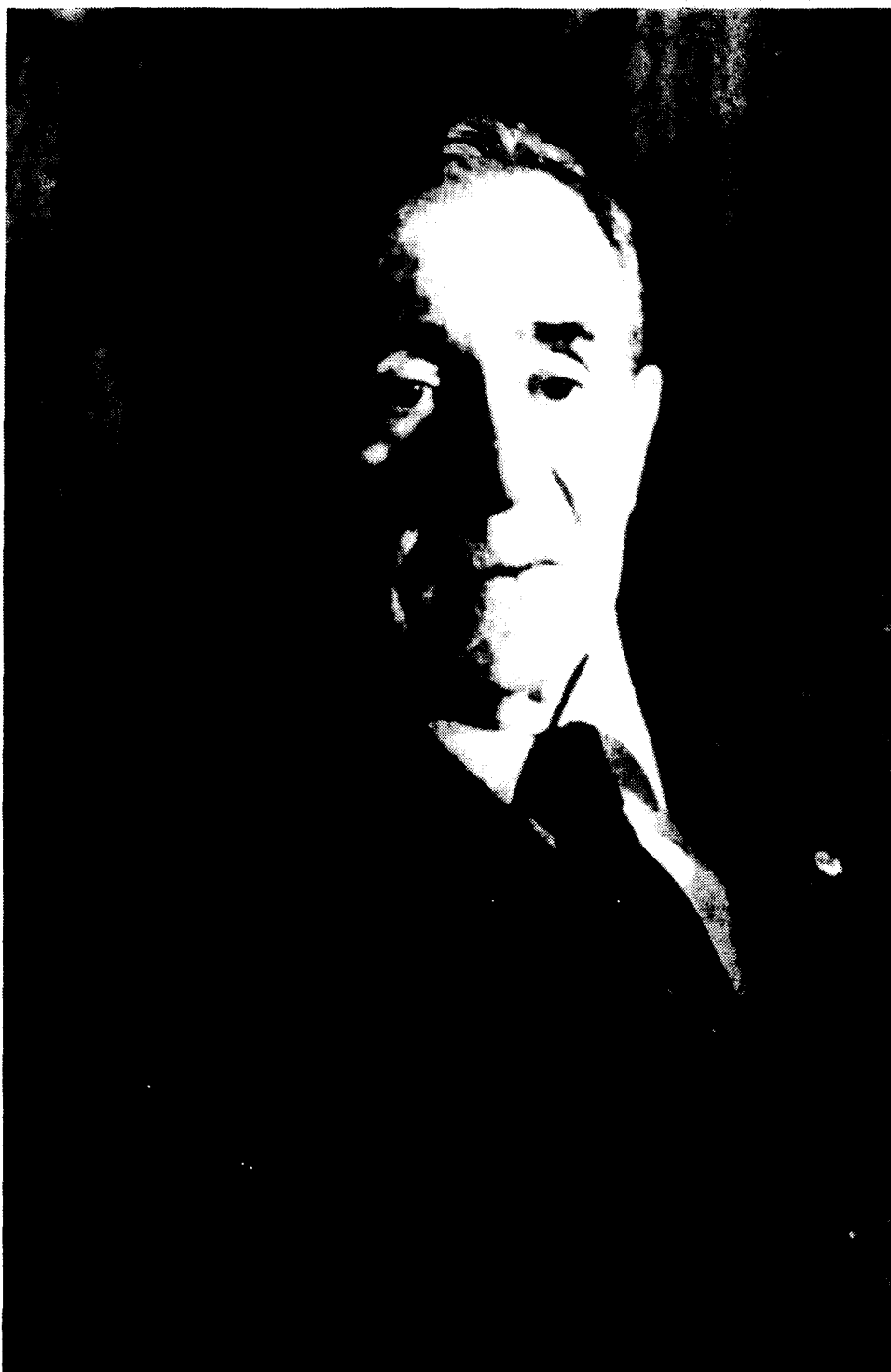
Current American policy, which obviously encourages Moscow’s anti-American hardliners, also boosts the boldest reformers. Perhaps the biggest single stimulus to internal economic reform is President Reagan’s “Star Wars” missile defense program, which has confronted the Soviet leadership with a most painful reminder of its own failures to match Western technological might. If the elderly leaders now in power cannot find a political solution to the Star Wars challenge, the younger generation seems destined to reject their policies for bold and adventurous experiments intended to make the Soviet Union more innovative—and more competitive.

Understanding Soviet foreign policy must begin with one basic fact: the Soviet Union and Japan began to industrialize at the same time, both suffered grievously in World War II, but today, Japan can compete effectively—too effectively—with the U.S. in the export of the highest-technology products, while the Soviet Union cannot even produce simple machinery that can be sold in Eastern Europe and the Third World. There is not the slightest evidence that the present Soviet system will ever be capable of solving this problem. The traditional claim that their system offered a model for other countries to copy has, in the last 10 years, turned to ashes.

The Soviet system is not taken seriously in the politics of industrializing Third World countries like Taiwan, Indonesia, India, Egypt, Argentina and Mexico. It is the Japanese model that is influential. Indeed, the Soviet Union looks as if it will fall behind not only Europe and Japan, but also South Korea, Singapore and maybe, God forbid, China.

In an interview published in the military newspaper *Red Star* last May 9, Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, then chief of the Soviet general staff, hinted strongly that the Soviet economy is not capable of maintaining Soviet military equality with the West. In that interview and in an article published in November (two months after his unexpected removal from office), Ogarkov essentially said that nuclear weapons are unusable. The number of nuclear weapons is so great, he said, that “you do not have to be a military man or a scholar to understand that a further buildup of them is becoming senseless.” The fact that all these points were repeated either verbatim or in stronger language in the November article was a signal that he was not removed for saying them—that the leadership essentially agrees.

In the May 9 interview, Ogarkov implied that conventional weapons or technological



Andrei Gromyko, along with Konstantin Chernenko and other old-timers, are for detente with the U.S.—to ensure pressure for modernization of the economy.

SOVIET UNION

Will star wars force domestic reforms?

breakthroughs would be decisive. He painted the gloomiest picture of “the rapid changes in the development of conventional means of battle...[which] sharply raise the fighting capacity of conventional weapons, bringing them to the level of weapons of mass destruction in their effectiveness” and “the rapid development of science of technology [which] create the real preconditions for the appearance in the near future of still more destructive kinds of weapons based on new physical principles.” In this interview, he pointedly cited a statement by Friedrich Engels about the dependence of the military upon the economy. These statements were *not* reprinted in the November article, a clear sign of how Ogarkov got in trouble with Konstantin Chernenko.

If the Soviet population senses that the traditional communist system will doom the Soviet Union to a progressively inferior world position and even threaten its military security, the stability of the Soviet system will be in jeopardy. The Russian people are not the inert mass often depicted in the West; they conducted two of this century’s most drastic revolutions in 1905 and 1917. They are fully capable of another.

If the driving force of economic reform were simply long lines in the stores and poor selection of consumer goods and foods, reform would require difficult changes in social policy—a raising of the prices of items like meat and bread, incentives for managers to economize on labor and to fire inefficient workers, toleration of riches for the innovative. But these

would not have major foreign policy implications.

But because the problem is technological backwardness, the foreign policy implications go much deeper. Leonid Brezhnev seems to think that importing Western technology would solve Soviet difficulties, but Soviet economists now understand that the opposite solution is more appropriate. Soviet managers will never produce goods of world-level sophistication and quality unless they are forced to meet foreign competition. Soviet managers must be forced to export technology, not simply import it, and to compete with what is imported.

The Soviet leaders now must move toward integrating the Soviet Union into the world economy in a way that China is now beginning to do.

But how is Soviet business going to compete if Russians don’t develop a feel for Western society and tastes—and if Soviet Central Asians don’t develop such a feel for the markets of the Mideast? How can this be done without permitting greater contact with Western (and Moslem) ideas? How can the Soviet Union move toward much more intimate contact with the world market without permitting greater economic integration of West Germany and East Germany, of Western Europe and Eastern Europe?

Since the answers to these questions are clear enough, how do reformers in Moscow sell a program that arouses workers’ fears of higher prices and unemployment (fears that led to a Solidarity movement in Poland), the managers’ fear of foreign com-

petition and the conservative fears of the subversive impact of foreign ideas in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe? In particular, how do they do it when the U.S. is in a highly confrontational posture?

If the published Soviet debates of the last two years are any guide, the answer is clear. They sell their reform ideas with anti-Americanism. Like Marshal Ogarkov, they talk about the relationship of Western technology to modern weapons and suggest that military security demands reform. Like the new director of the major international relations institute INEMO (Alexander Yabovlev), the former editor of the government newspaper *Izvestia* (Lev Tolkunov) and the former ambassador to Germany (Valentin Falin), they speak about a messianic, repulsive American political culture with which it was always impossible to do business, even under President Richard M. Nixon. And they sell it (not yet publicly, but in private counsels, according to my Soviet informants) with proposals for anti-American moves to woo Western Europe and Japan—not simply with outmoded “peace” campaigns, but with concrete gestures like returning to Japan the four disputed islands Moscow seized after World War II, or granting Japanese the right to build Toyota plants in Siberia or permitting real West German-East German rapprochement.

So the Soviet debates cannot be characterized as simple pro-detente and anti-detente. The major positions in the debate are much more complex. Even the following attempt to lay out four positions misses many differences among people within each group.

The first position is, in essence, anti-detente. It is found in the military newspaper *Red Star* and the conservative journal *International Affairs*, and treats the West as united and threatening in its drive to achieve military superiority. As with Caspar Weinberger, this position does not usually seem associated with the advocacy of military action, but focuses on the need to increase military spending.

This position tends to be anti-reform, because its proponents tend to be xenophobic and isolationist. It is expressed in assertions like Gen. Dmitri Volkogonov’s that the U.S. has a “desire to ‘replay’ the lost battles of the 20th century by nuclear war” and that military expenditures are needed more than investment and reform: “The defense of socialism, as never before, demands not only the availability of the appropriate defense potential (economic, scientific-technical, spiritual and military), but also the capability to use them immediately.

The fact that Marshal Ogarkov went beyond this position to suggest the need for reform indicates that simple-minded conservative positions are politically weak. The inherent problem with the conservative approach is that military spending cannot solve the technological problem. Unless the SS-25 now in development flies, the Soviet Union still has not been able to develop an operational, solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile 20 years after the American Minuteman (which is such a missile), and its lag in computer technology puts it at greater disadvantage with other modern weapon technologies. Moreover, drastic cuts in consumption to allow massive new military expenditures would be dangerous politically, especially if there is no accompanying reform program that holds out the prospect of a better life to ordinary citizens.

The other three positions are all pro-detente in one way or another, but they differ

The Soviet system is no longer taken seriously by industrializing Third World nations.

enormously in their policy implications.

The second position might be called the traditional detente view. Like the conservative first position, it is based on a two-bloc image of the world, but those in this camp believe detente between the two blocs is possible. Advocates of traditional detente emphasize the centrality of the Soviet-American relationship. They insist on Soviet dominance of its bloc, but, to an extent that is not appreciated in the U.S., they generally concede Europe and Japan to the U.S. Despite their verbiage, the traditional pro-detente faction generally likes the Western alliances as a means of keeping West Germany and Japan non-nuclear, and of justifying Soviet troops in East Europe.

The traditional detente position is held by politburo members and their allies who are deeply worried by economic reform and frightened by outside ideas. It is based on the hope that a relaxation of Soviet-American tensions would reduce the domestic pressure for reform. Originally it was based on the belief—now discredited—that importing technology would be a panacea. In real political terms, the traditional detente position, not the anti-detente position, has become the basic conservative stance. It is the position taken by men such as Brezhnev, Chernenko, Gromyko and Dmitri Ustinov, the defense minister who died last month.

The third position might be called activist American-oriented detente. Its proponents think that the Soviet-American relationship must be central, because only these countries have the capability of destroying each other. But unlike the traditional detente advocates, they are dedicated to economic reform. Consequently, they often speak fervently of international cooperation, the integration of the world economy and the building of trust between the Soviet Union and the U.S.

This is not just propaganda for the West, but is a plea for a change in Soviet attitudes and policy as well. The traditional detente people tend to be reactive, but the activists think that American hostility might be broken down by far-reaching Soviet arms control proposals, tension-reduction in the Third World and less Soviet secrecy. This position seems to be represented by several professional Americanologists, including scholars like Georgi Arbatov of the Institute of the USA and Canada and Fedor Burlatsky, once an aide to Yuri Andropov.

The fourth position is the anti-American, pro-Europe, pro-Japan one. In public, it is expressed by extreme anti-American positions and by strong emphasis on division within the West. For example, the director of IMEMO, Yakovlev has written of a "relative leveling in the strength of the three centers of power: the USA, Western Europe and Japan," and he argued that "in the historically foreseeable future the centrifugal tendency in the capitalist world will grow." He signaled his attitude toward reform by stating that Japan is in first place in many technologies, has become "a world economic state" and has supplanted the U.S. as "the symbol of youth and dynamism in the Western world."

In private, many of the proponents of anti-American detente can be contemptuous of what they see as Soviet government's half-hearted efforts to woo Europe and Japan, and they have more substantial actions in mind. This group, however, consists of proponents of economic reform who are not merely thinking geopolitically of a dissolution of the Western bloc or of altering the loyalties ("Finlandization") of West Europe, but are contemplating a greater integration of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into Europe and Asia as a whole, with consequences for both blocs.

It seems that Andropov was attracted to this anti-American, pro-Europe and pro-Japan detente conception. There were men with varying views in Andropov's entourage. The careers of those like Arbatov and Burlatsky, adherents of the activist, pro-American detente view, did not prosper while Andropov was general secretary, but Tolkunov and Yakovlev were promoted. When, on Sept. 23, 1983, Andropov made his famous statement about the impossibility of dealing with America, he almost



Chernenko represents one of four pro-detente tendencies among Soviet leaders.

surely was not rejecting detente in general, but was moving toward a pro-Europe position.

Indeed, movement toward an anti-American detente remained strong after Andropov's death in February and through the early summer of 1984. Thus, May and June featured an anti-American boycott of the Olympics, apparent encouragement of visits to West Germany by East German and Bulgarian leaders, signs of impending agricultural reform, Marshal Ogarkov's remarkable interview and subtle signs of a weakness in the position of Gromyko (a lower-ranking than Ustinov in order of election speeches and a subnormal celebration of his 75th birthday in July). These were all part of a consistent package.

In August and September, as Chernenko recovered his health after a bout of heart trouble, a number of these policies were rejected in an apparent return to the traditional detente policy. Gromyko came to Washington, and his speech at the United Nations evoked memories of wartime alliance—one of the code-words of the Americanists. The East German and Bulgarian visits to West Germany were canceled, and the central committee plenum on agriculture did nothing. Ogarkov was removed and Gromyko's stock soared. In October, three months later, his birthday was suddenly celebrated with unprecedented fanfare, second only to Brezhnev himself.

The near-term future is hard to predict. Six of the 11 voting members of the politburo are over 70. They average 74 years of age and, if the Kazakhstan party leader is excluded, they have each worked an average of over 30 years in high posts in Moscow. The other five members average 60 years of age and have each worked in Moscow for an average of three years. Gorbachev, with six years work in Moscow, is the old-timer. To think that these outsiders agree with what has been done for 30 years stretches credulity.

Gorbachev has an enormous range of responsibilities—coordination of the economy, ideological work, foreign communists, agriculture, the food industry and,

by all indications, still personnel selection. He is given assignments like his trip to Britain to test him, to broaden his experience and to build him up on Soviet television; and he has been passing these tests with flying colors. If there are forces strong enough to challenge him for the succession, it is virtually inconceivable that they would not be strong enough at least to give Romanov or someone else these kinds of experiences.

Gorbachev's policy positions cannot be pinned down. He has been playing a cauti-

IN THESE TIMES FEB. 20-26, 1985 15
ous Gary Hart role, signalling in various ways a commitment to new ideas, but not being specific. He escorts the Hungarian leader around, he chairs a very unusual Supreme Soviet Foreign Affairs Commission session on expansion of trade with the Third World (which everybody knows requires manufactured goods of world quality), he speaks out for the expansion of expenditures on light industry in his election speech (but that passage was excised from *Pravda*).

Domestically, the logic of his situation should certainly push him to reform. In foreign policy Gorbachev as leader would have to opt for detente. But after an initial, broad "peace" campaign, he could easily choose the pro-Japanese, pro-European (and anti-American) version to help him sell his domestic reforms to skeptical comrades on the central committee. But much depends on events and the timing of the succession.

The foreign policy alignments and options in the Soviet Union create innumerable paradoxes for American policy and Soviet-American relations. American policy has had a devastating impact on the political standing of the American-oriented detente position that is most dedicated to a real improvement in Soviet-American relations. When the leaders have adopted the reassuring gestures the activists propose—small reductions in Soviet troop strength in Central Europe or the renunciation of the first use of nuclear weapons, for example—the U.S. has acted as if they were signs of weakness and has become more confrontational. Yet these confrontational aspects of American policy have been the biggest stimulus in building support for significant economic reform that the conservative old guard has resisted.

President Reagan's Star Wars program seems to have terrified the conservative old guard. As a consequence, those like Chernenko and Gromyko surely are almost pathetically eager for an agreement that would create the impression that American technology is being controlled. But in placing space at the center of their disarmament policy—or perhaps being forced to emphasize it by their pro-reform opponents—they have ensured that the Soviet press is filled with articles about the American threat in space. These articles implicitly and repeatedly remind Soviet readers of American technological superiority, and thus of the need for reform and new leadership if no agreement is reached.

Jerry Hough teaches political science at Duke University and is on the staff of the Brookings Institute. ©1985 Jerry F. Hough

Brazil at the Precipice

April 13-28, 1985

In Brazil, the economy, the ecology, and religion are three issues that are inextricably intertwined. As its natural resources are being developed and depleted, massive population shifts are taking place. Migration toward the urban centers continues in huge numbers despite the lack of employment to be found there. The resulting conditions present a background to the church's call for an "option for the poor," the challenge of Liberation Theology. We will see problems of industrialization as well as the seeds of solutions to those problems.

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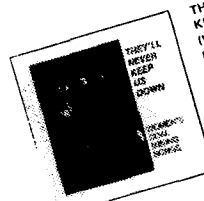
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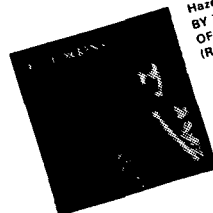
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PERSPECTIVES

What do the Reagan deficits really mean, and to whom?

By Richard B. Du Boff

I HEARD THE NEWS TODAY, OH boy...and though the news was rather sad, I really had to laugh—at the spectacle of grown adults trembling over the twin threats of the federal budget deficit and the Soviet Union, both as phony as a three-dollar bill.

This, I think, is the basic attitude the left should take toward The Deficit. The brunt of the attack against Reagan's sea of red ink is coming from Wall Street as is, and not for reasons having anything to do with its impact on the arms race, social problems, or the distribution of income and wealth. Henry Kaufman and company have been sounding the alarm mainly about the financial market implications of the Laffer-Kemp-Regan supply-side follies, and there is no need for the left to involve itself in such intraclass warfare.

Statements from the left should emphasize one issue: the estimated \$222 billion deficit for fiscal 1985 has been deliberately engineered by Reagan as a scare tactic to stampede Congress into wiping out what's left of the welfare state. Even in their peak years these programs, from food stamps to education loans to subsidies for mass transit, the arts and Amtrak, were hopelessly underfinanced; they need to be increased, not cut. Advocates of expenditure reductions to close the deficit gap must be told to look to the Pentagon. Massive reductions in the U.S. military budget would also represent the greatest single contribution to world peace anyone could make.

But wait: can so many smart people be wrong? Aren't there perils awaiting us because of Reagan's huge and unprecedented deficits? The following are some thoughts to help sort out all the questions:

- Deficit spending can sometimes have harmful economic effects. If the economy is running out of underutilized labor and factories and approaching full employment, continued government spending in excess of tax revenues can be inflationary

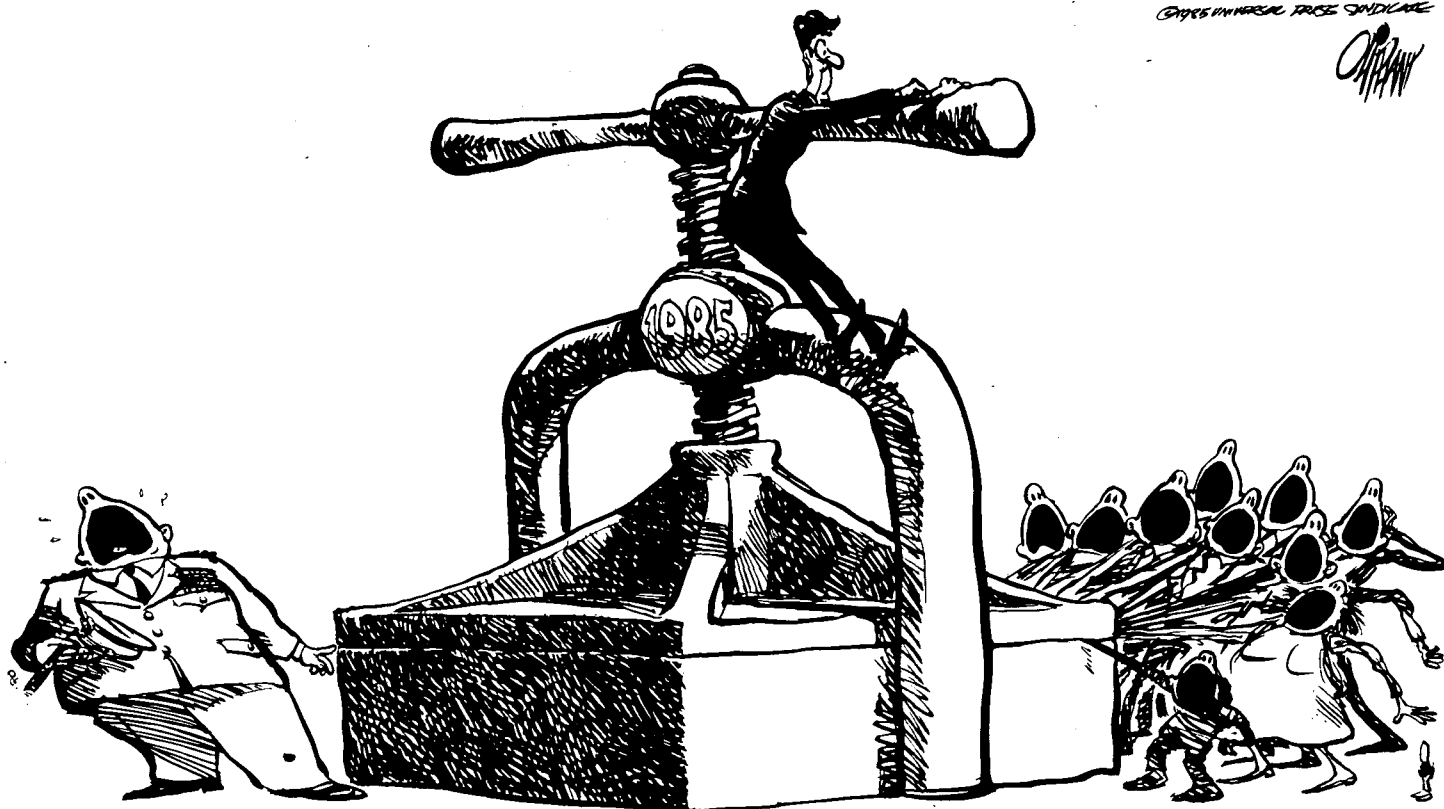
and might drive up interest rates sufficiently to "crowd out" private borrowing (especially for housing construction). To state the condition is to realize how remote it almost always is. The U.S. economy typically does *not* operate near full employment. Since the end of the postwar boom in late 1948 the official unemployment

rate ratio of publicly-held federal debt to federal tax receipts declined steadily, from more than 400 in 1950-52 (when the debt averaged \$216 billion and tax collections \$53 billion) to 130 in the late '70s. The irresponsibility of the last four years has pushed the ratio back past 180 percent (the 1965-68 average), and it seems

could again be useful if the federal government ever redirects its energies from war preparation to social reconstruction.

• Still, as J.M. Keynes tried to teach his equilibrium-mongering colleagues in the economics profession, "long-term expectation" is the critical hub around which capitalist stability revolves. "The state of confidence," Keynes wrote 50 years ago, rules an economy in which investment and economic expansion are not results of rational calculation but of "animal spirits—of a spontaneous urge to action rather than inaction." Keynes' comments referred in particular to the soft underbelly of modern capitalism—financial markets.

In this respect, "the problem of the deficit" is now embedded in the always-fragile structure of capitalist expectations. A nagging fear exists on Wall Street and in corporate suites that Reagan's deficits are out of control. This nervousness pre-



ment rate has fallen below 4 percent only in 1951-53 and 1966-69—under the stimulus of big increases in war outlays. Rising deficits may be the only kind of Keynesian fix that has prevented "late capitalism" from lapsing into the depressions characteristic of earlier capitalisms.

- Furthermore, under such circumstances, both fiscal means for reducing the deficit—expenditure cuts and tax hikes—will have recessionary impacts on output and employment.

- The debt-servicing position of the federal government is stronger now than it was two or three decades ago. The percent-

age ratio of publicly-held federal debt to federal tax receipts declined steadily, from more than 400 in 1950-52 (when the debt averaged \$216 billion and tax collections \$53 billion) to 130 in the late '70s. The irresponsibility of the last four years has pushed the ratio back past 180 percent (the 1965-68 average), and it seems

headed higher thanks to the Reagan tax cuts aimed at crippling the federal government's ability to raise revenue (the Proposition 13 model).
• As the federal debt crosses the \$1.8 trillion mark, annual interest charges approach \$130 billion. This is a legitimate concern. Interest payments have jumped from 6.8 percent of total federal expenditures in the mid-'70s to more than 13 percent at present (and from 1.5 to 3 percent of the gross national product). Since Reagan took office, increases in interest costs have exceeded all the "savings" he has achieved in health, education, welfare, urban and social service programs. The political effects are, as intended, reactionary. The economic effects are both regressive and perverse, with income redistributed toward the rich and away from the mass of people whose purchasing power provides the real margin between prosperity and stagnation.

But this kind of interest burden is not inevitable, even with very large deficits. Much of it is a product of the historically high interest rates of recent years, in turn a consequence of Federal Reserve "tight money" policies designed to control inflation by inducing periodic recessions.

As Harry Magdoff and Paul Sweezy have pointed out in *Monthly Review*, the federal deficit averaged 23 percent of the GNP during World War II, while interest rates on three-month Treasury bills remained below 1 percent. The rate on long-term bonds, in fact, never exceeded 2.5 percent. In 1983-85 the deficit has reached 6 percent of the GNP, but three-month T bills have been sold at interest rates that dipped below 8 percent only briefly; the yield on long-term bonds has fluctuated between 11 and 14 percent.

Popular control of the Federal Reserve would alleviate this problem. During the war years, 1941-45, the Fed was, in effect, compelled to assist the Treasury in its deficit financing by purchasing government securities to keep interest rates, and debt service charges, low. The precedent

The estimated \$222 billion deficit for fiscal 1985 has been deliberately engineered by Reagan to scare Congress into wiping out what is left of the welfare state.

disposes the investing class toward bailing out the moment the nation's financial superstructure shows signs of cracking. And there is no shortage of potential fissures—an unexpected economic slowdown and a corporate liquidity squeeze, a drop in foreign investment in the U.S. and a plunge in the foreign exchange rate of the dollar, a moratorium on loan repayments by a Third World debtor nation and a large-scale American bank failure or (more probably) something totally unforeseen. Capitalism promises us only one thing—some future crisis the nature of which we cannot imagine because of the swift changes capitalism itself specializes in generating. All we know is that it will likely be accompanied by financial dislocations and a severe "bear market," maybe even financial panic.

In this context the specter of the deficit must be taken seriously indeed. Here the task of the left is to educate, and to discuss the ways it might take advantage of the situation when it occurs.

Richard B. Du Boff teaches economics at Bryn Mawr College.

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STZ1

DTs IN SANTA CRUZ

IN THESE TIMES REACHED NEW LOWS IN John Judis' cynical remark (*ITT*, Jan. 23) about periods of intense political conflict that often create new men and women who "tend to revert back to a barely modified version of their old selves after the shouting is over." I thought about this remark and Judis' attack on one of the most politically significant movements of our time, the New American Movement, last week, during my weekly est session. Far from reverting back to our old selves, after the shouting was over we sat around reading passages from James O'Connor's crucial book, *Accumulation Crisis*.

The dream lives on.

—D.T.
Santa Cruz, Calif.

AT 40?

THE BIG QUESTION: WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN? According to the Bible, Genesis 2:7, the Lord God formed man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Adam, according to the Bible, did not become a living being until he was able to breathe on his own. Until then, he was only in the process of being formed.

Likewise, it also applies to the development of a baby. When it is in the womb it is being formed and gets its development from its host, the mother, and is a parasite. It does not become a living being until it breathes on its own. If the baby does not breathe it is considered a still-born birth and life did not take place.

—Hilda Pelzi
Zion, Ill.

EXAMPLE

JUST A NOTE TO COMMEND YOU FOR "Black Empowerment Blues" (*ITT*, Jan. 16). This is the kind of article that challenges one's perceptions and goes beyond personalities, in this case that of Jesse Jackson. Precisely why *ITT* is indispensable.

—Charles P. Finn
Charlottesville, Va.

BETTER THAN NOTHING

IN HIS ESSAY "SOCIALISM: WHO KNOWS what it is?" (*ITT*, Jan. 23), John Judis takes the socialist left to task for not having an attractive view of socialism. While this contention is largely correct, Judis, without any examination, dismisses the "fantasies of new left socialists whether of the democratic Trotskyist or neo-anarchist persuasion." It seems harsh to write off these tendencies without at least a little exploration. After all, if they have "fantasies" at least they've got something.

—Jay D. Jurie
Tempe, Ariz.

LENNY SEELIG

I'D LIKE TO ASK LEON FINK ("BLOWING the whistle," *ITT*, Jan. 23) what he means by a "fanatic organizer," both in general and in relation to Leonard Seelig. In their more charitable moments the enemies of labor have resorted to this term to describe union organizers who are particularly effective and courageous. Lenny Seelig was both these things and more. He had a deep and abiding faith in the power of the organized working class to make things right. He was a warm friend and a cherished comrade. Fink's references to him are a grotesque perversion of Lenny's memory and importance.

—John M. Cammett
Professor of History, John Jay College,
City University of New York

Leon Fink replies: By fanatical, I simply meant indefatigable, or singlemindedly devoted to the union. I did not intend the comment to be perjorative, and I'm sorry if it was read that way.

UNEMPLOYED COUNCILS

ALLEN HORNBUM (*ITT*, JAN. 16), IN HIS interesting story about organization among today's unemployed, is misleading about unemployed organizations in the '30s. Hornblum says, "Through 1930 and '31 most of those out of work suffered quietly...."

The largest demonstration of unemployed in this country took place on March 6, 1930, when a million jobless workers took to the streets in nearly three dozen cities, generally in the face of hostility from the police. During the next four months, 4,000 "Communists, alleged Communists or working people" were arrested in connection with labor and unemployed activity, according to John Dos Passos (*New Republic*, July 2, 1930). And on July 4, 1930, at the second of two preparatory conferences, the Unemployed Council of the United States was formed by 1,320 delegates who had been elected by already existing Councils. Many Councils were not stable, but militancy among the jobless contrasted sharply with the passivity that Hornblum suggests.

Hornblum notes that "many of the earliest and most experienced organizers of the unemployed in the early '30s were Communists," but then adds that they "stressed direct action and quick victories over organization building and long-term strategy."

Compared with the many unemployed demonstrations and organizations of the jobless in the long series of earlier depressions in this country, the unemployed of the '30s were very well organized. The Unemployed Council, for example, ran a meticulously planned National Hunger March in 1931 (and another in 1932) made up primarily of elected delegates from functioning Councils. Also, the Communists worked hard for what most people would describe as long-term goals. They, and the unemployed, called for—and got for the first time in American history—federal work relief programs. They led the successful campaign for national unemployment insurance.

Further, in the beginning of the unemployed movement of the '30s, Communists talked to the jobless rather more about what they believed to be the virtues of Soviet Communism than some leaders in the CP thought was advisable. And in the presidential election of 1932, several Unemployed Councils rejected the Republican and Democratic tickets and endorsed Communist candidates who vehemently supported the proposition that capitalism was the perennial cause and socialism the only permanent cure for joblessness.

—Franklin Folsom
Ward, Colo.

(Franklin Folsom was editor in 1934 of the *New York Hunger Fighter*, published by the Unemployed Council, and is author of an unpublished history of unemployed movements from 1808 to 1942.)

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

MARKETLESS

JOHN JUDIS' "SOCIALISM: WHO KNOWS what it is?" (*ITT*, Jan. 23) raises both salient and difficult questions regarding the possibilities and prospects for the development of a viable socialist current in the U.S. I share with Judis a frustration with the American left's seemingly self-perpetuating avoidance of a creative discussion of "...what socialism might be." In the absence of such discussion, the left continues to conceptualize its own social and political project in the most imprecise and unimaginative terms.

However, to suggest, as I think Judis does, that American socialists will be more effective in building popular support for a radical transformation of contemporary society by divorcing their "socialist politics from their everyday political activity," and adopting a conception of socialism that views a marketless, planned economy as "inherently undemocratic...necessarily hierarchical and authoritarian," is to raise to the level of political principle a cynicism that may very well prove as damaging to the radical project as the absence of debate concerning the nature of the goal to which we are committed.

—Brad Rose
San Francisco

SANITIZED?

THANKS FOR PRINTING MY LETTER ON toxic waste (*ITT*, Jan. 16). I am flattered that you chose to devote so much space to my analysis of the chemical industry.

Why, though, did you publish practically the whole long-winded analysis, while cutting the one reference I made to Marx?

Your use of the red pencil may have made the letter more accessible to the liberals among your "socialist" readership, and your editing may have given my comments a political usefulness that they lacked originally, but I still feel censored—censored by a "democratic" and "socialist" publication allegedly devoted to free and open discussion of important issues on the left. And for me, coming originally out of a Libertarian, even Goldwaterian political background, that's infuriating.

Maybe it's only academic naivete about the principle of free speech, but I found the experience of being sanitized in print appalling. My own goals include the popularizing of Marxist ideas among the different trends of the environmental movement, as well as the building of a left movement; and by deleting my

Marxist reference in the overcapacity argument you severed the one goal from the other. You also increased my distrust of *ITT*'s editorial motives.

Is this all a gross over-reaction?

—Andy Feeney
Washington, D.C.

Editor's note: Yes, we think so. We made several cuts in Feeney's letter, as we do in many letters. In our view the reference to Marx was gratuitous, adding nothing to the point of the sentence in which it appeared.

PENSIONS

YOUR "IN SHORT" ITEM "CALLING THE Lincoln Brigade" (*ITT*, Jan. 9) is askew in certain matters of fact and principle. As a veteran of the International Brigades and as an executive board member of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, I doubt that many of us will pursue, as you urge, the course of applying for a Spanish government pension.

First, the law passed by the Gonzalez administration is grossly undemocratic—granting pension rights only to non-coms and officers of the Republican army. We VALB members will vigorously demand its extension to all the Spanish soldiers with whom we fought.

The 15th Brigade of the Spanish Republican Army was never "commonly known" as the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. That was a generic appellation used (and still used) to group together all U.S. volunteers wherever they served and that use was confined to the U.S. As one who served in the Canadian MacKenzie-Papineau Battalion and in the Special Machine-gun Battalion of the 15th Army Corps, I can assure you that any attempt to Americanize the brigade name would have been correctly criticized as shameless chauvinism.

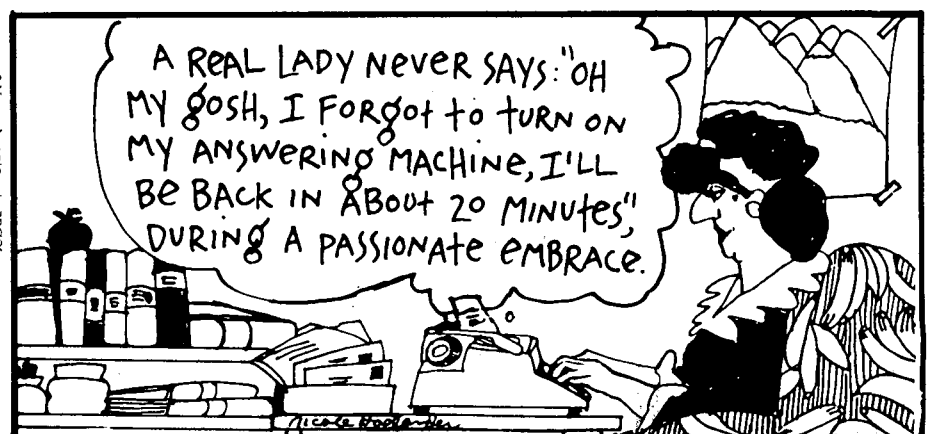
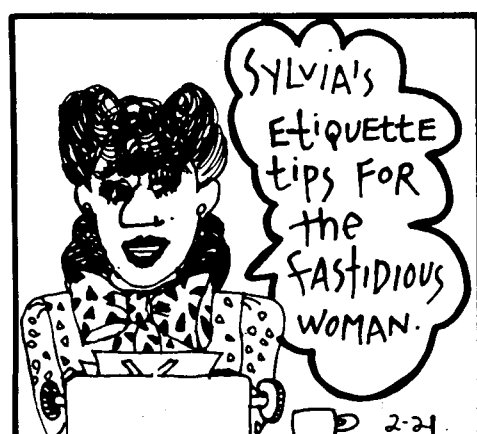
Second, we Lincoln vets are owed nothing by the Spanish people. We are their brothers and sisters who fought, bled and died with them in the "Good Fight." We went to Spain asking only one thing—a chance to take our place alongside them in the frontline fight to save the world from fascism and the war that was to come.

If there is a debt owed to us, it is owed by the forces here at home who impeded our way to Spain, helped cripple the Republic's war effort and persecuted us for long years after our return. We work for passage of the Dellums bill that would accord us our rightful place among U.S. veterans of World War II.

—Leonard Levenson
New York

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



In the Rainforest: Report from a Strange, Beautiful, Imperiled World

By Catherine Caufield
Knopf, 304 pp., \$16.95

By Stephan Schwartzman

HERE IS GOOD NEWS AND bad news in Catherine Caufield's *In the Rainforest*. The good news is that the day after the last tree in the last rainforest has fallen, you won't wake up without any air to breathe. The notion that rainforests are the world's "green lungs" is false, since mature forests consume as much oxygen as they produce. The bad news is that you may wish you had, if you're among the people fleeing New York City, which could by then be under 16 feet of water. One possible result of massive deforestation, the "greenhouse effect" from increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, could raise temperatures and change the climate worldwide.

Of course, the hypothesis is just a hypothesis, and not all experts are convinced. But when all the data are in, it will also be 20 years too late to do anything about it.

Global climate shifts and melting polar ice caps are the stuff of science fiction, and they appeal largely to apocalypse forecasters and cranks of various descriptions. Caufield's book could change that. At least, it could lift the haze of exoticism that has surrounded rainforests—"jungles"—in much of the Northern Hemisphere. It could put what is happening in the

world's rainforests on the agenda of environmental and human rights organizations as well.

In a cogent and well-written book, Caufield shows the vast biological diversity that is being lost in the destruction of rainforests from the Brazilian Amazon to the Philippines and traces some of the costs and benefits of that process. Government officials and corporate beneficiaries of development are fond of posing the situation as a kind of Faustian bargain—rainforests, and the peoples indigenous to them must be sacrificed on behalf of the poor and landless. Caufield suggests that very often the devil does not pay, even in the short term. She says, "The effect of most rainforest exploitation is to redistribute wealth upward. The permanent, widely distributed benefits of the intact forest—the protection of wildlife, water catchments and the soil and the provision of food, medicines and building materials—are turned into immediate, short-term profits for a small group of investors and consum-

ers." The loss entailed may be global in scope.

Further, all rainforests have a good deal in common. They grow on some of the poorest soils on earth, and contain an astounding proportion of the biological diversity of the planet. Perhaps five million species of plants and animals and insects (40-50 percent of the species that exist), live in the 2 percent of the earth's surface covered by rainforest, many unknown to all but the local peoples. In South America, there may be 2,000 species of fish alone still scientifically unnamed.

This amounts to more than jobs for a few generations of taxonomists when you consider the example, as Caufield has done, of what has come out of medical research into rainforest species. How about a frog that yields an anaesthetic 160,000 times as strong as cocaine? Or the Madagascar periwinkle, thanks to whose alkaloids the treatment of leukemia and Hodgkin's disease has been revolutionized? South America alone has some 10-15

thousand unclassified species of flowering plants.

If there is any doubt that something is out there that modern science has yet to discover, or has lost forever to loggers' chainsaws, check the series of misadventures detailed in the chapter "Fever Bark." In 1633 Peruvian Indians points out a tree of the Cinchona genus to a Jesuit priest, and the first effective treatment of malaria was discovered for the West. Extract of Cinchona bark, the source of quinine, was initially rejected by European doctors as charlatanry (Oliver Cromwell died of malaria rather than take the "jesuits' powder"). It was more than 200 years before Cinchona became widely available. Now malaria shows increasing resistance to the array of synthetics used to treat it, and natural extract of Cinchona is coming back.

It would require another book to introduce the cultural richness and diversity of the peoples indigenous to rainforests as well as Caufield has done for the ecology of the forests and the processes of development taking place there. She has done an admirable job of describing both the adaptation of indigenous peoples to their environments and the myriad, often devastating pressures on them. Caufield even goes a key step further, reporting little-known cases of indigenous resistance to domination, such as the Txucahamae of Central Brazil or the Kuna of Panama. The Kuna, sovereigns of their Atlantic coast territory since the 16th century, have a flourishing and highly flexible

traditional society. Recently the group has preempted encroachment on a crucial border area by turning a high forest unsuitable for agriculture into a forest and wildlife preserve, with facilities for research and "scientific tourism."

Caufield does not neglect local complexities—the difficulties, for example, logging companies have encountered in trying reforestation, or the opportunity that forest colonization holds out for poor Indonesians in the massive "transmigration" project, or the drastically unequal land tenure relations that send South America's landless into the Amazon. But, from the global scrapbook of rainforest development she has assembled, a big picture emerges. From hallucinatory schemes to turn a major tributary of the Amazon river into a 1,200-mile long chain of lakes (only the first stage of a larger project), to a factory turning Highland New Guinea forests into 40 million pairs of chopsticks a month, to the leveling of Central American rainforests for pasture to feed future fast food burgers, there is a familiar sameness to the short-term profit motivations in play.

The problems are too complicated, and Caufield's research too well done, to admit any easy answers. But the book raises the central questions of how these resources are to be used, in whose benefit, and who is going to decide.

Stephan Schwartzman has conducted anthropological research among the Krenakore Indians of the Brazilian Amazon.



FICTION

Who is that masked writer?

The Diaries of Jane Somers

By Doris Lessing
Vintage Books, 502 pp., \$6.95

By Judith Kegan Gardiner

IS DORIS LESSING SELLING HER cakes and eating them too? And why is she blaming the baking company?

Last fall one of England's most famous living novelists revealed that she had played a hoax on the public by publishing two novels under the pseudonym of Jane Somers. Her British publisher refused them. Her American publisher recognized them. Her French publisher thought she had helped Somers write them. Dealing principally with women's friendships, the novels were reviewed casually, sold modestly

and dropped from sight.

Surprised and apparently chagrined at the success of her ruse, Lessing has now reissued the two books in one volume under her own name, explaining her reasons for the deception: to expose publishers and reviewers, "to cheer up young writers" by showing the difficulties they face, to prove that she can still write realistically and to "get free of that cage of associations and labels that every established writer has to learn to live inside."

The first novel, *The Diary of a Good Neighbor*, finds "Janna" Somers isolated by the deaths of her mother and husband. Childless, she pours all her energy into her work as editor of a glossy women's magazine. Her life seems dry and empty. She is ready

Doris Lessing was surprised at the success of her ruse.

for a change. In a drugstore a muttering "old witch" asks her help. She follows the 90-year-old woman home to her squalid basement. Raging against fate and mortality, Maudie seems a heroic survivor to Jane. Through friendship, then love, for Maudie, Jane learns empathy and commitment. She overcomes her revulsion against old age and dirt, bathing the incontinent old lady and nursing her final hours. She also learns why society patronizes old people. "The very old are too frightening, too much of a threat, we can't stand it.... So they have to be dear little children. For our sakes." Meanwhile, Jane plays role model and surrogate mother to her niece and begins to write romantic fiction, transforming Maudie's harsh past as a milliner's assistant into "something gallantly light-hearted, full of pleasant surprises. Maudie would love her life, as reconstructed by me."

Lessing too seems to be reconstructing a better maternal past. Her autobiographical *Martha Quest* novels portrayed the hero's mother as a dreary nuisance. However, in the preface to the *Diaries*, Lessing claims that Jane Somers reflects her ideas about what her mother "would be like if she lived now: that practical, efficient, energetic woman, by temperament conservative, a little sentimental...." Perhaps, like Maudie, Lessing's mother "would love her life" as "reconstructed" into Jane Somers' chic career and passionate friendships.

Mother-daughter themes continue in the second novel, *If the Old Could...*, in which Jane takes on another niece, an immature punk. Aunt Jane is firm, supportive, honest, reliable—all the things the childcare books say a mother should be, but Kate is past

help a disaster area. Jane finds her joy instead in another improbable love, not for an old woman this time but for a married, middle-aged doctor who catches her in his arms when she trips on a train platform. Oddly enough, this heterosexual idyll recreates a romantic version of mother-child symbiosis. Jane and Richard hold hands, gaze into one another's eyes, eat and drink a lot, talk little, avoid sex and read each other's thoughts.

Jane Somers is free from Doris Lessing's "dryness, like a conscience," and also from Lessing's Marxist past and feminist following. She likes mocking fashionable politics. She forbids "middle-class revolutionaries" to meet on the magazine's time. Similarly, she turns against "women's lib thoughts" and the "little manifestoes," the "slamming of doors in men's faces" of the office feminists.

Despite this acerbity, Jane's sympathies are often feminist, pro-working class and anti-imperialist. She thinks nurses understand patients better than doctors do. For example, she worries about the exploited Third World war maids and overworked single

Doris Lessing played a hoax on the public by publishing two novels under the pseudonym of Jane Somers.

mother "Home Helps" who work for the welfare state; and she turns over childish Kate to a wise, vibrant lesbian editor who lives in a commune.

Temporarily shedding her famous name, Lessing nonetheless sought to reaffirm her identity as a writer, the "underlying tone, or voice" that is a writer's "essence." "Some people think it is reasonable that a devotee of a writer's work should only be able to recognize it when packaged and signed; others not," she chides.

In her current series of space fictions, interrupted to write the two Jane Somers novels, Lessing charts "Canopean" civilizations as they rise and fall. Words like "history" throw Canopean characters into rhetorical convulsions, and they must learn to align themselves with the forces of cosmic order without undue sympathy for any one doomed planet. Painting this enormous story through many novels, Lessing perhaps felt the need to reassure us that she can still describe human beings and to reassure herself that her own "essence" as a writer shines forth through any disguise, just as the immortal souls of the Canopeans can be recognized through their many mortal incarnations.

Her masterpiece of a decade ago, *The Golden Notebook*, dramatized questions about a writer's identity: who is there "behind" the character, "inside" the book? Is the author the same person from character to character and from text to text? *The Diaries of Jane Somers*, attractive if conventional novels in themselves, raise the same questions, not between their covers but in the space between their pseudonymous publication and their matrilineal legitimation.

Judith Kegan Gardiner teaches English and women's studies at the University of Illinois.

Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality

Edited by Carole S. Vance
Routledge & Kegan Paul,
462 pp., \$11.95

By B. Ruby Rich

THERE CAN BE NO ARGUMENT. No matter what your position on sexuality may be, the *Pleasure and Danger* anthology has the best book cover in recent memory. Rendered in tones of aquamarine, the cover drawing pays an homage to the sexy-woman-in-danger images of '40s films. A woman with a yellow note pad, seams in her stockings and high-heeled shoes on her feet stands poised midway between a beam of yellow light and the shadows of a stairway. To the left, this questionable sunbeam reveals a door ajar and a phone off the hook. To the right, near the top of the stairs, stands an alligator suitcase with its lid half-open, an innocent cosmetic case posing as Pandora's box. This woman is visible below the waist only. Her legs are planted wide apart, one on the front cover, one on the back, connoting at once the stability of the pose and the vulnerability of the space thus left open—filled, here, by the words "pleasure and danger" on the book jacket's spine.

We know better than to judge a book by its cover. Or do we? Like its cover, this book has got style. Like its cover designers, its authors have got a sense of history, a taste for popular culture and a lot of nerve in the face of danger.

The book is grounded in a real and historic occasion—the Barnard conference of 1982, "Towards a Politics of Sexuality"—organized by the volume's editor, Carole Vance. The book emerges from a specific moment. With all the chapters representing presentations originally given at the conference, and with two years elapsed since the event and the bitter political feuds that trailed in its wake, this anthology has acquired a semblance of intellectual autobiography, recording as well as reflecting back on its own genesis. It was the start of new battlelines being drawn. The "pro-sex" group wanted to open the discussion on sexuality and speak on their own. The "anti-sex" ranks were filled with women against pornography and its offensive to carry its message behind feminist lines.

The volume encompasses 23 essays, framed by an introduction and epilog by Vance, with poetry, a conference program, bibliography and follow-up petition all replicating the shape and feel of the conference. At the time that the conference was being attacked by Women Against Pornography and their allies as some sort of hotbed for sadomasochism, "incorrect sexuality" and antifeminist attitudes, conference organizers complained that the attacks warped the realities of a wide-ranging and complex conference. What, then, do we find here? Now that the fuss has died down, how does the book stack up?

Indisputably, there are a number of important and moving essays in the anthology. The finest historical piece is by Linda Gordon and Ellen DuBois. "Seeking Ecstasy on the Battlefield: Danger and Pleasure in 19th-century Feminist Sexual Thought" builds on the work of Judith Walkowitz and others to consider how the push and pull of seeing how women as victims versus woman as a free agent

led earlier social purity movements into directions that ended up restricting and codifying women. While opposed to these moralist movements on the grounds of their dubious outcomes, Gordon and DuBois are also reluctant to endorse the toppling of inhibition as inherently liberatory.

The most enlightening analysis of contemporary movements is "The Body Politic: The Defense of Sexual Restriction by Anti-Abortion Activists," in which Faye Ginsburg incisively explicates the rational motivations of anti-abortion women. Freeing us from the cartoon illusion that they are all dupes or idiots, she traces their clear commitment to a self-interest lodged in domesticity, childbearing and sexual self-control.

Ginsburg's determination to counteract reductive descriptions of the enemy stands in stark contrast to the Alice Echols essay, which does just that. In "The Taming of the Id: Feminist Sexual Politics, 1968-83," Echols rehashes the themes she set earlier in the *Powers of Desire* anthology. Assertions and caricature take the place of analysis as Echols strains to discredit so-called cultural feminism as a bunch of puritanical ladies. Echols' work continues to present personal construct as historical record, and it's a disservice.

Sharon Thompson, in "Search for Tomorrow: On Feminism and the Reconstruction of Teen Romance," provides an elegant, evocative and lucid account of the romantic narratives of teenage girls. Identifying the quest-romance as the female version of the adventure story, Thompson is quick to identify the heart of the romance: "like the murder in a detective novel, sex makes it a story worth telling." Thompson comes closer than most of this anthology's contributors to actually dealing with sex, as she records and interprets the stories she has been gathering over a number of years. She argues against utopian prescriptions and urges us to face up to the terrifying contradictions facing girls coming of age in the '80s.

Other essays focus on particular concerns. Hortense Spillers refuses to separate sexuality from economics in her theoretical analysis of the place of black women within current sexuality debates. Kate Millet writes movingly on the sexual world of children, both as it is and as it might be. Oliva Espin traces the complicated relationship of sexuality to processes of assimilation and acculturation for Latin women. Carol Munter links women's obsessions with weight to fantasies of perfection and eternal self-transformation.

Indeed, one of the revelations of the anthology, for anyone looking expectantly for the scandals so long imagined, is how tame all this is. What was the fuss all about? At the same time, despite its eloquent statements and substantive facts, the anthology ultimately tells us little about women's sexuality. It tells us volumes about the anger surrounding it, the fears cloaking it, the fights waged over it, and yet...the "it" remains as mysterious and untouched as ever. Like a watched pot refusing to boil, the subject itself is still held in abeyance.

Running throughout the volume, instead, is something else. Contrary to the Women Against Pornography women who pro-

tested the conference in 1982, this is no campaign of outrage. Rather there is a cry of pain. Many of these contributors are battle-scarred. It is clear that, whatever their divergences from "politically correct" sexual behavior, they have paid. Their dues and more. Joan Nestle, writing about "The Fem Question," tells less about actual butch/femme relations (that she did in the *Heresies* Sex Issue of 1981) than about the fights surrounding that telling. It is impossible to read the essay without experiencing the damage done by restrictive rules of sexual behavior, without feeling the pain that seeps into her words.

When Amber Hollibaugh, in her typically eloquent fashion, writes thoughts on "Desire for the Future," again, pain and defensiveness born of too many attacks imprint themselves upon her words. When she concludes with the following statement—"we can never afford to build a movement in which a woman can 'lose her reputation'"—we must agree.

If any essay in the volume confirms the fears of the "anti-pro-sex" crowd, then it must certainly be Gayle Rubin's "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the

Politics of Sexuality." Rubin seeks to lay out the ideological foundations of sexual construction, restriction, hierarchies and redefinition. While her arguments are brilliantly framed, Rubin's subject and goals defeat her. She ends up trying to haul specialized sexual practices into the mainstream (with flip comparisons between sex and food) or resorting to a civil rights framework (complaining, for example, that sadomasochists aren't allowed to wear their fetish clothes to the office). As the all-tolerant civil libertarian, Rubin ignores the relationship of the erotic to the forbidden. The result, more often than not, is comedy. That she has inspired so much outrage, on the other hand, is tragedy.

Indeed, in retrospect, the most pertinent essay in *Pleasure and Danger* may well be Faye Ginsburg's anti-abortion analysis. She warns us clearly not to oversimplify our antagonists. This anthology shows itself fully capable of "saving the reputations" of its contributors after two years of attacks. The work printed here must give the lie, once and for all, to the characterizations that have tried to portray too many of the contributors as latter-day she-

devils. However, the volume also reveals that Vance *et al* are not above constructing equally reductive portraits. Defining the two sides of this debate as pro-sex and anti-sex does no one justice. Pleasure and danger mingle on both sides, taking different shapes, shaping different fears.

Pleasure and Danger is an important volume that informs us, both with its successes and failures, of the difficult terrain we still face in an attempt to reclaim, let alone reconstruct, a female sexuality. If it is a sectarian volume, then it merely reflects the status quo of the sex debates in 1985.

What is clear is that sex for women remains ringed with terror, both of the act itself and the discourse that seeks to explore it. The terror is frequently displaced, exploding at times into rage at those who would dare to transgress the traditional silence. And underlying the anger and the fear is the inevitable, subterranean counterforce of desire.

We need many more volumes to follow.

B. Ruby Rich is a feminist critic who has written on film and sexuality for the *Village Voice*, *Jumpcut* and other publications.

SEXUALITY

Is there anything new under the covers?



ART«»ENTERTAINMENT

By Joel Schechter

PERFORMANCE

SINCE SAMUEL BECKETT wrote the play *Endgame* in 1957, his vision of atomic age desolation has remained all too timely. The author's stage directions never indicate whether a nuclear war or another disaster has occurred before the first act, but the characters behave as if some catastrophe took place outside their shelter. "Out-

side of here it's death," the chair-ridden Hamm warns his companion, Clov. "Here" is supposed to be a bare, high-walled shelter.

At the American Repertory Theatre production of *Endgame*, directed by JoAnne Akalaitis in December and January in Cambridge, Mass., the shelter is far from bare. In fact, the setting dif-

fers so much from Beckett's stage directions that the Nobel laureate in literature has disowned the production and called it a parody of his play. "Anybody who cares for the work couldn't fail to be disgusted by this," according to Beckett. (He lives in Paris, and has not seen the production himself; presumably he trusts the word of

his agent.)

Beckett's objections have called deserved attention to the production, and raised questions about topical interpretations of classics. In fact, the stage setting designed by Douglass Stein may depart from the author's stage directions, but it does so to the play's advantage, ingeniously Americanizing

the play. Stein recreates a lifesize subway tunnel to serve as Hamm and Clov's underground shelter.

The shell of a burned-out subway car fills the stage. Beneath the car are pools of undrained, gray water. Above it, metal beams hover, half collapsed. Higher still small rays of light seep through the street-level grates. On the gray wall that covers the back of the stage you can see part of an orange and black sign indicating that this space was once designated as a fallout shelter.

Inside the bleak shelter live Clov, Hamm and Hamm's legless parents, Nagg and Nell. The parents reside in ash bins. The chair-confined Hamm cannot walk either and depends on Clov to feed his family. If Clov stops serving Hamm and decides to leave the site, the other three will die; the possibility of Clov's departure is another form of death faced throughout the play. With grim comic humor, the characters recall better days, and converse about almost anything to keep away the silence that will come with abandonment and death.

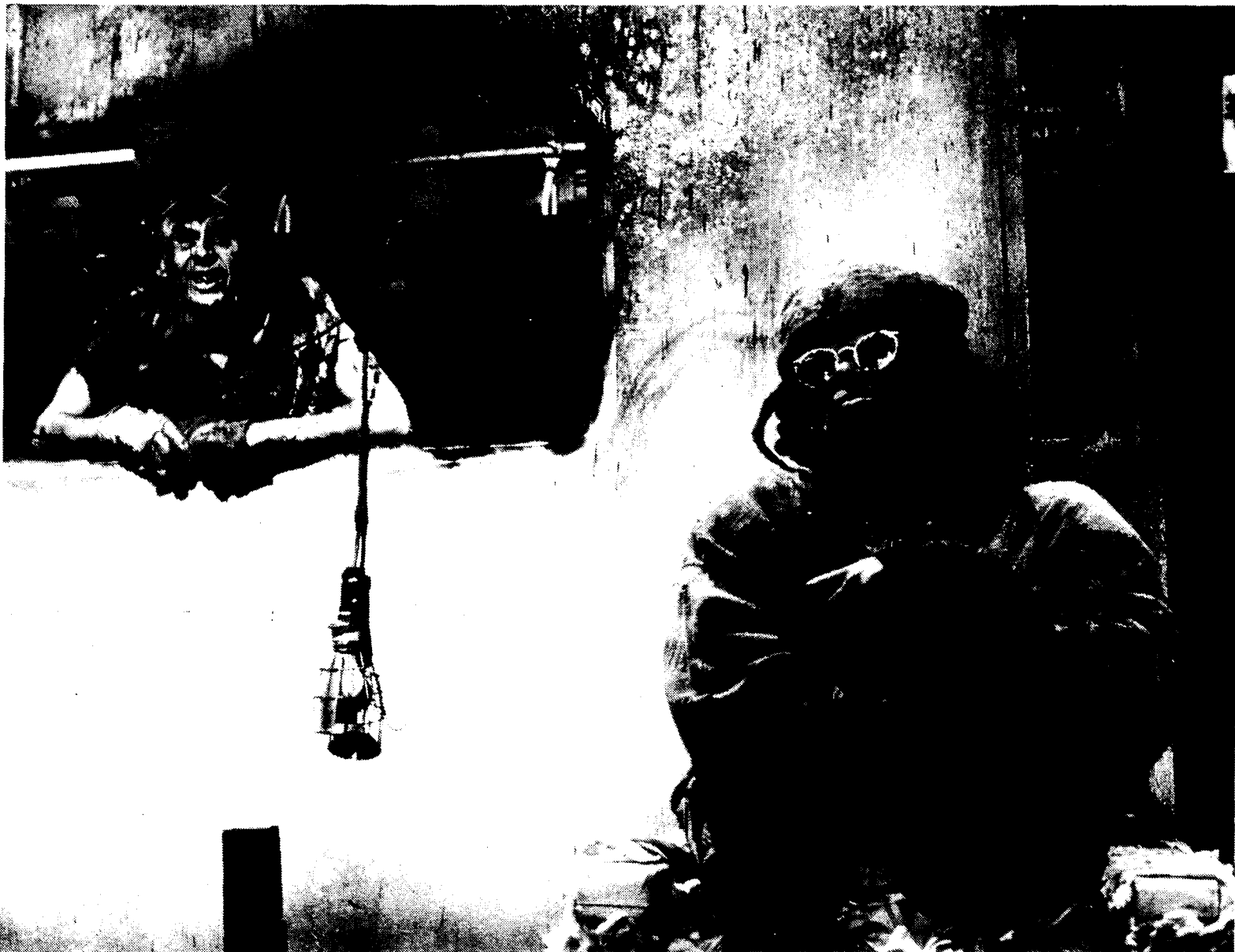
The silence is also kept away by new music composed by Philip Glass especially for this production. The pulsing electronic reverberations turn the scene into an almost Wagnerian spectacle of the lower depths as the play begins. (The music fades out when the dialog starts.)

Black actors.

JoAnne Akalaitis has changed the traditional staging of Beckett's play in another significant way, by casting black actors in two roles. The fortunate casting choice allows actor Ben Halley Jr. to portray Hamm as a street-smart Rastafarian, complete with dreadlocks and a full, musical range of speech rhythms. Rodney Hudson's black dialect reveals new comic nuances in Nagg's recollection of his happy past life, when the world still had sugar plums and Turkish delight.

The ironic implication of these casting choices is that black characters would survive a nuclear

Renegade Beckett on the subway



John Bottoms (left) and Ben Halley Jr. in the American Repertory Theatre's production of *ENDGAME*.

FILM CLIPS

Gaza Ghetto

In this 82-minute documentary made by an American and two Europeans with funds from European TV, we live through a week in the life of a Palestinian refugee family. Aside from its title, the film steers away from editorializing, letting the daily life of Abu el-Adel's family, who are among 650,000 people crowded into the Jabalia camp in Gaza, make its own statement. The effect is more shocking than any rhetoric, because the anguish of thwarted lives and shredding social fabric becomes unavoidable. The family came to Jabalia after fleeing an invaded village in the area in 1948. Since then, family members have been arrested and housing razed. The pregnant wife recalls how her mother died hemorrhaging in childbirth for lack of hospital care. Daughters on their way to school describe street demonstrations. Men take filmmakers along on their daily, hours-long commute to Israel in search of hard-to-find work. These stories are legion in refugee communities, of course.

The film, by letting us hear them in context, demonstrates that a Palestinian self-consciousness is thriving and growing, while Israeli settlers, soldiers and officials, as well as visiting Jewish tourists, show few signs of awareness that the problem must be confronted. The filmmakers offer Israeli authorities an opportunity to explain their views, including Ariel Sharon, whose large personal farm occupies the territory of several former villages. But the answers only underline the complaints of the refugees. This is a sobering film, one that puts a human face on a national crisis.

—Pat Aufderheide

For further information write filmmaker Joan Mandell, c/o P.O. Box 43445, Washington, DC 20010.

Choosing Children

Co-produced and directed by first-time feature filmmakers Debra Chasnoff and Kim Klausner, this 45-minute film focuses on the growing number of

lesbians who are deciding to become mothers. The filmmakers interviewed 60 people and selected six non-traditional families. For her interviews Klausner used an all-woman crew, which she felt was necessary in order to make the women interviewed feel comfortable in telling their personal, even intimate stories. With candor and disarming humor, the women describe their relationships (or

non-relationships) with the fathers of their children, the mechanics of artificial insemination and the varying reactions of grandparents, social workers, teachers and others. Through careful selection of interviewees, Chasnoff and Klausner have captured the variety within a single subculture. One lesbian mother shares childrearing with the father, a gay man; another was left by her lover and is bring-



Two lesbian lovers and their children from *CHOOSING CHILDREN*.

ing up two children alone; an extended family of close friends raises young Annie in San Francisco. An educational film in the best sense of the term, *Choosing Children* speaks to the lesbian and gay community about possibilities for parenting, and to a wider public about the importance of understanding different ways of life. The weeping of a mother who had to cope both with taunts of hospital personnel and a premature child is not easy to forget.

—Karen Rosenberg

For more information contact Women's Educational Media, P.O. Box 441266, Somerville, MA 02144, (617) 776-6759.

Where Did You Get That Woman?

This half-hour portrait introduces us to an unlikely heroine, a 77-year-old black washroom attendant at a Chicago singles bar. Joan Williams, aged, impoverished and a veteran of discrimination, might seem the profile of a victim. But by the time

war because they were victims and survivors long before the war; military build-up at the expense of social programs has consigned many of them to homelessness and extended stays in subway stations, war or no war.

Beckett's playwriting benefited from black actors in roles at least once before, when the Free Southern Theater staged *Waiting for Godot*. The story of two tramps waiting for a man who never arrives became a metaphor for the civil rights movement in the '60s; the mysterious Godot for whom the blacks waited was just as elusive as equality and justice.

As a member of Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament and New York's experimental Mabou Mines theater company, Akalaitis has dealt with nuclear issues before, most notably in her production of *Dead End Kids: A History of Nuclear Power*. Now she and her collaborators have turned an anti-nuclear sensibility to Beckett's *Endgame* and made the play more political and topical than many past productions of it.

Beckett might justly complain that some of his dialog suffers from the change—it sounds too precious in the dim, dank subway tunnel, too far removed from the physical reality of the situation. At the same time, the visual imagery of this staging made it an unforgettable, acidly comic representation of what is already reality to the homeless. The production was so compelling, in fact, that it is tempting to suspect Samuel Beckett disowned it only to pique the curiosity of prospective theatergoers. Writing about *Endgame* in 1957 he was far less judgmental of his own play; he said, "The less I speak of my work the better. The important thing was for you to see the production." However, his objections unfortunately make it probable that this production will not be restaged any time soon. ■

Joel Schechter teaches dramatic literature and criticism at the Yale School of Drama.

filmmaker Loretta Smith finishes her portrait, she becomes both an engaging personality and an exemplar of the black struggle to survive. A preacher's daughter in the South, she married early and lived in the world of blues musicians. On her own in Chicago, she worked where she could find it and lived in the battlefield of a low-income housing project. She is full of wry comments, both on her own experiences and on the view you can get of the well-heeled professional class from a club bathroom. The film intercuts her experiences with archival footage and stills (and has been criticized for implying that the footage is from Williams' own life). Williams died shortly after the film was finished. A modest but moving documentary, the film deserves its airing over public television stations, which are showing it at different times around the country during black history month.

—Pat Aufderheide

For further information write *Texture Films Collection*, P.O. Box 1337, Skokie, IL 60076.



Joyce Rudolph/Orion Pictures Corp.

MOVIES

Cosmic affairs and Dustbowls

By Carrie Rickey

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO, like me, look to the movies to take the temperature and check the pulse—not to mention the other vital signs—of relations between the sexes, how do we diagnose 1984 films?

In last year's films, the Dustbowling-for-dollars trend has been much mentioned, but nobody has bothered to analyze its sexual component. The second, a category I'd like to dub the Cosmic One-Night Stand, is virtually an unmentionable in the lexicon of the new chastity.

First trends first. To suggest a different reading on Dustbowl Trilogy, look at Sally Field in *Places in the Heart*, Jessica Lange in *Country* and Sissy Spacek in *The River* as contemporary evocations of Mother Earth.

In the Dustbowl films, the men are childlike, dependent and destructively stubborn. And when acts of God or government threaten their land, our heroines strive mightily to save it. Even if it means subordinating their men to the good fight.

Instead of seeing these films as sagas of feisty (is there no other adjective? It's become the female equivalent of "ballsy") heroines, couldn't we see the stories as tales of modern love—between a woman and her land. I suspect the unconscious subtext to the Dustbowl films is that men come and go, but the homestead is forever. These movies attribute romance to things of bankably enduring value. You could say they're about the eroticization of property.

If the Dustbowl movies celebrate the only loves that endure, then the Cosmic One-Night Stand

eroticizes (if, in fact, this is a verb) a love that's transient.

The hunk from outer space.

In movies as wildly different as *The Brother from Another Planet*, *Starman* and *Terminator*, an extraterrestrial or futuristic hunk crash-lands in America and falls antennae-over-heels in love with a comely, if lonely, Earthwoman. Who is definitely not to be confused with Mother Earth. She's independent, if unhappily so, and is looking for a fella to fill up her nights.

They meet—it's love at first sight. In the nearest boudoir they pluck each other's heartstrings (not to mention other instruments of carnal pleasure). But then the alien must return to his faraway planet or far-flung future.

For our modern heroine, the advantages to this kind of flash/flesh arrangement are many. Because feelings are mutual, she never has to agonize over whether she should make the first move. Because it's only once, she hasn't any of the standard conflicts about career-versus-caress—a brief encounter won't jeopardize her work life. Because he'll never return, she'll never suffer the "He never calls, he never writes" anxiety.

Our superhero avoids Earth Dating Pitfall #1, euphemistically called "the commitment problem." Because it's understood that they'll never love like this again, he doesn't feel trapped into a relationship. (Even though he might be a man of the Future, he doesn't have to worry his handsome head about *their* future.) He also sidesteps Dating Panic #1 as well: since he and his honey's only assignment is in bed, he doesn't have to worry who pays. It's definitely Dutch Treat.

She pays, however. In the frankly messianic *Starman* and

Terminator—perfect movies for the holiday season in which they were released—the heroes' mission is to sire Superbaby. Their Cosmic One-Night Stand leaves the women with an unexpected Christmas bonus: boy fetuses who will be born to deliver the Earth. Of course they're male. Do you think Hollywood is ready for Ms. Messiah?

(In the belief that perhaps carnal pleasure is its own reward and not necessarily an unfortunate byproduct of procreation, the thoughtful hero of *Brother from Another Planet* has fun in bed. Instead of foisting Madonnahood on his lady friend, he leaves her to pursue her singing career.)

Watch the skies.

The Cosmic One-Night-Stand (CONS to you, buddy) is the movies' Utopian solution to love: unlike the Dustbowl Trilogy, it does not romanticize property. Instead, it romanticizes the male wanderer by suggesting that love and sex happen once—on the inter-

Linda Hamilton and her futuristic lover, Michael Biehn in *TERMINATOR*.

planetary fly. It resolves problems of courtship and commitment by simply obviating them. Is there any romantic imperative to the CONS films? Girls take note: don't wait by the phone. Instead, watch the skies.

In two cases, the CONS also concedes to Moral Majority types (though one would hope that they are indeed in the minority here) that good sex is procreative sex. Another possible reading is that the only way to justify extramarital sex is by citing its holy precedent of the immaculate conception. Call the CONS movies a new twist on the biblical theme: they're *maculate* conceptions. Or, some would say, misconceptions.

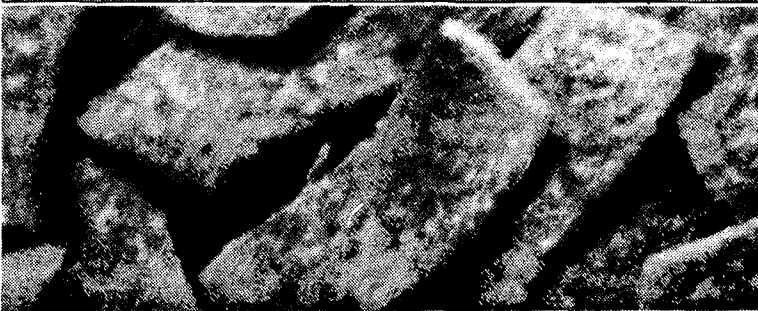
As diagnosticians, should we look at the DT (Dustbowl Trilogy) and CONS as social diseases or as evidence of social pragmatism? What we find in the DT is that property is sometimes more important than people (something adherents of the neutron bomb have argued for years). What we find in the CONS is the return of an active, (not to mention *potent*) superhero deigning, between missions, to dally with the passive, waiting female. Sex isn't dead, it just happens once in a lifetime.

The good news: there's plenty of roles for women in these films. The uncertain question: are these old-fashioned girls?

During the Renaissance, women were generally represented as the madonna, as mother nature or as muse. In the iconography of DT and CONS, women don't represent any significant advancement over such depictions of a woman's proper role: the Dustbowl Dianas are obviously variations on the theme of mother nature. The CONS Connies are unmaidenly Madonnas. To put a slogan on it: you've come a long way, baby, to get where you'd got to by the Renaissance. ■

Carrie Rickey is the film critic for the *Boston Herald*.

CULTURE SHOCK



New Ideas, Marketing Div.

A corn-chips commercial uses new technology to alter footage from old TV series, including "Mr. Ed." "Let's face it," said one of the admen involved, "talking to a horse about Tostitos snacks is an arresting idea."

Fast Food, Chinese Style

The Yi Li Fast Food Restaurant, serving hamburgers, hot dogs and sweet-and-sour pork, has opened in Peking. Flaunting its origins, the restaurant uses an image of Donald Duck for its logo.

Just When You Thought It Was Safe to Turn On the TV

"Amos & Andy," the TV show stereotyping blacks that public pressure forced off the airwaves, is now available on videocassette.

High-Status Toppers

The *Indiana Jones* style hat has become a fad in Germany, where "Dallas" style cowboy hats are already hot sales items.

Say It in Pictures

The Iraqi Embassy is now receiving entries in its anti-Khomeini poster contest, with an \$8,000 first prize offered.

Miners

Continued from page 11

"Thatcher has made the biggest mistake of her life. She's woken us up and we won't go back to sleep. She doesn't know what she's done."

While the politicization of the women could lead to future problems for this male-oriented industry, the NUM has already shown signs of gratitude for their solidarity. At last year's Labor Party Conference, seven months into the strike, the union was one of the few organizations to back demands for formal minority caucuses of blacks and women within the party.

Like many positions taken by the miners, this was not popular with Labor's leadership. The entire course of the dispute has led to reciprocal mistrust between the NUM and the Labor Party leadership. It is common to hear expressions of frank distaste from strikers about the party's stance on the strike. In Kent, both Moyle and Birkett are disillusioned with Labor. Birkett speaks of a motion from the party membership of his local ward calling for Labor leader Neil Kinnock's ouster. With an eye to the damage that any outright association with the strike might inflict on the party's ratings in the polls, Kinnock has trodden far too warily to appease the left of the party—and, of course, the miners.

The counterpoint in the party to Kinnock's position has been provided by Tony Benn, a tireless campaigner for the miners' cause. But Benn's repeated calls for a general strike have sounded a note of implausibility. He believes the lesson to be drawn from this strike is that "the power of unity" can only exist after a process of pure inversion: the NUM has experienced the most withering division in its membership since 1926 and it is the unity of a reticent labor movement that has been the object lesson.

This was grasped clearly by E.R. Bunt,

secretary of the Dutch Trade Union Federation (FNV), in a recent comment that the NUM should expect no more support from foreign unions than it can raise from organized labor at home. Bunt has tried to obtain backing for the British strike from unions in Holland and is disappointed by the limited success of his campaign to prevent coal from leaving Dutch ports for Britain. But he adds that the British themselves have not managed to rally their unions in an import blockade. Despite efforts from the National Union of Seamen and the two largest British railway unions, the miners are at present extremely isolated—which says more about Thatcherism in Britain than it does about the fundamental character of the unions.

At the close of 1984, in a cold, damp strike headquarters in Deal, John Moyle declared his belief that the miners' strike would be resolved by the end of March. At the time, he maintained that the close-down of Britain's coalfields would have to precipitate major power shortages within 12 weeks in order for the strike to succeed. While groups in London have monitored several power cuts over short periods—which they interpret as a sign that coal shortages are biting at last—there are grounds for thinking that coal supplies will not now be the issue on which this strike is made or broken.

Offensive strategy.

In 1978, the Conservative Party drew up a document outlining an offensive strategy against the British unions and recommending that the most favorable terrain for initial engagement was the coal industry. The Ridley report, as it is known, advocated heavy stockpiling of coal prior to any action, along with provision for import from abroad. Seven years later, other noteworthy recommendations in the document, including welfare reductions for strikers and mass police mobilization, are now a matter of fact. Figures for imported coal more than doubled between 1983 and '84, from 3.5 million to 7.5 million tons.

On this evidence alone, it is hard to believe that the minimal inroads made by the strike into Britain's energy grid are a serious threat to the government. Instead it seems likely that the outcome of the dispute will be determined by the strikers' staying power and the NUM's ability to generate negotiations with management.

After 175 hours of fruitless talks between the NCB and the NUM, negotiations have assumed increasing importance. The strike is far from being solid. In Nottinghamshire, the heartland of working miners—which broke ranks with the rest of the miners in 1926—under 5 percent of the 30,000-man workforce is out. Elsewhere figures for miners crossing picket lines have risen recently in proportion as the prospects for a negotiated settlement have declined. The highest total figures for miners now reporting to work are put at 80,000 out of 87,000, but these are disputed by the union.

In the last two weeks of January and through into early February, some 5,000 miners abandoned the strike in a demoralized reaction to the NCB's insistence that no new talks with the NUM could take place without written guarantees that the union would be prepared to discuss the possibility of pit closures on economic grounds—the core of the miners' objection to the MacGregor plan for a streamlined industry.

An NCB official told *In These Times* that it was no longer in management's interest to negotiate, since this simply slowed up the return to work. But clearly it is now vital for the union to get into negotiations before the strike weakens beyond repair. The NCB's formula for unacceptable preconditions to any new talks is widely seen as a consequence of direct pressure from Thatcher, who would like management to sit on its hands, refuse to negotiate and watch the miners starved back to work. Mounting pressure from public opinion and the influence of NACODS, another colliery union, may make this option impossible, however.

If, on the other hand, talks do not go

ahead in the very near future, there will be more support within the NUM for a decisive national return to work on a "no deal" basis—a suggestion put forward by the militant South Wales leadership last week. This strategy would preempt the strike dying a slow death, but would not mean conceding defeat. It would also, in theory at least, keep open the possibility of fighting closures in future on a pit by pit basis.

Meanwhile, the miners are approaching the limits of endurance. Their leadership turned down in October an opening for a bare-bones deal that would have led to an independent review of proposed pit closures—an offer made when management was on the run. Their messianic president has asked more from them than any union leader from any rank and file in post-war British labor history. In the majority, without a national ballot, they have followed him willingly down a road of gruelling hardship in the fight to protect their jobs.

They have had to come to terms with the violence of the police and, more damaging in the long term, the violence within their own communities of miner against miner. They have seen their union fined by the courts and its assets seized.

The prime minister of their country is eager to go for total victory over a now conciliatory union executive and, in the words of one miner, "to make us eat dust" rather than settle for a deal that would leave their collective and individual dignity intact. They have had the influence of monied right-wing elites used against them in the form of back-to-work movements groomed and encouraged by wealthy impresarios from Thatcher's entourage. The poverty they have had to sustain is a return, in many cases, to levels of the '30s. They continue to face drastic cut-backs in their industry? Scargill has predicted that 70,000 jobs will be lost in the end.

And yet, against massive odds, they have defied the MacGregor plan, and the direct political challenge from Thatcherism that it represents, for almost a year. It is no surprise, then, that the strike has already entered into the realm of late 20th-century labor mythology in a country very different from the one in which the miners presided over the defeat of Prime Minister Edward Heath's Conservative government 11 years ago.

Jeremy Harding reports regularly from London.

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HELP WIN JUSTICE

Berlin

Continued from page 24

are in unions), the government is offering to pay each Turkish worker thousands of dollars to go home.

If there is a dominant theme on the wall in Kreuzberg, it's world peace. Graphics and slogans target the U.S.-built NATO missiles being deployed in West Germany, and they reflect the sentiment also registered by polls and political party statements that the majority of West Germans oppose deployment.

Another common theme on the wall in Kreuzberg is rejection of both superpowers. One graphic superimposes a red hammer and sickle on an American eagle in red, white and blue. Below is the caption, "'No' to all tyrants." Graphics like these reflect the foreign policy attitudes of many in the Green Party, which, not surprisingly, has many supporters in the neighborhood.

Not all messages are unofficial. One sign posted by a wall checkpoint reads in big block letters: "You Are Entering the American Sector/Obey All Traffic Laws." Imagine the poor escapee on the run from the East who, having survived the guards, the dogs, electric fences and electronically-triggered machine guns, now has to worry about getting stopped for speeding.

The numerous bends in the wall make for a kind of political parallax view—the

phenomenon whereby an object, if viewed from two different points on a curved surface, can appear to be two different things. The "Yanks Out" signs, viewed as if in the East, looks like state propaganda. Located in the West, however, the same slogan turns into grassroots protest.

Berlin as a whole lends itself to other parallax views. In Kreuzberg kiosks and corner stores, you can buy newspapers of not one but two West German Communist parties, a pluralism that would be illegal in the one-party state to the East. Further, many say there are more Marxists in West than in East Berlin, especially in the universities. Conservatives argue this shows that those who live under "communism" correctly oppose Marx, and that only naive Westerners could still believe in a truly cooperative society.

Leftists focus on the fact that West Berlin has become a center of free thought, because of the West's need to showcase pluralism and academic freedom, and because West Berlin offers subsidies to artists and writers. It is particularly significant, they argue, that out of such freedom and in full view of East Berlin, a commitment to leftism flourishes.

Even the issue of East-West migration is more complex than it seems. Today some of the newest squatters are refugees from repression in the East. However, as West Germany's economic miracle fades and unemployment soars, dozens of these refugees are now seeking to return to the East.

For the well-to-do, West Berlin is a con-

sumer heaven of unbridled opulence. On Karl Marx Street in West Berlin, you won't find any Communist bureaucracies...just blocks and blocks of stores.

Of all the incongruities in Berlin, perhaps none is more delightful than the blossoming of Kreuzberg counter-culture in the shadow of the wall. After an afternoon walk along it, I began to wonder whether East German

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authorities might, if they knew exactly what was going on in Kreuzberg, decide to add a few feet onto the wall—not to keep their people in but to keep the Kreuzbergers out.

Jeff Cohen is a Los Angeles writer who recently toured Europe on money received in settlement of a lawsuit against Los Angeles police for spying on leftists.

CALENDAR

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NEW YORK, NY

February 28

Prof. James Petras will speak on "Authoritarianism, Democracy and the Transition to Socialism." Lecture sponsored by the Research Group on Socialism and Democracy. The Graduate Center of CUNY, 33 West 42nd St., New York City, Basement Auditorium. 7:00-9:00 p.m.

LINCOLN, NE

March 15-16

The 5th annual peacemaking event features Rear Adm. Eugene J. Carroll, U.S.N. (Retired), Deputy Director of the Center for Defense Information. Adm. Carroll will focus in two ad-

resses on CDI's campaign to end nuclear weapons explosions—at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary of First United Methodist Church at 50th and St. Paul St., Lincoln, NE, and at 8:30 a.m. at Nebraska Wesleyan University (across the street from the church). A Workshop on Conflict and Reconciliation led by Rev. Carol Windrum, Director of Peace with Justice Ministries for the Nebraska Conference of the United Methodist Church, and Nancy Moorehead, Consultant and Trainer in INTERHELP, follows Adm. Carroll's second address and will offer specifics on conflict management, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at NWU. The public is invited to this event which is sponsored by over 40 churches and community organizations throughout Nebraska.

CHICAGO, IL

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New Left Review 148 contains a critique of Raymond Williams' socialist utopia, *Towards 2000*, by Francis Mulhern; an account of the perils of nuclear coercion by Donald MacKenzie; a critical history of socialist feminism in Britain by Angela Weir and Elizabeth Wilson; a consideration of Jameson on Post-Modernism by Dan Latimer; a study of Democracy in China by Greg Benton and a report on the miners' strike by Huw Beynon.

New Left Review 149, due in March, includes Manning Marable on the Rise of the Rainbow Coalition; Mike Davis on the Pathology of Reaganomics; Gore Vidal: Portrait of a Surrealist; Jane Lewis, Biology and Women's Oppression; Richard Evans, Germany's Missing Revolution?; David McLellan on Marx and Human Nature. Annual Subscription (six issues) \$22 for individuals, \$40 for institutions. Each issue contains 128 pages.

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JEWISH CURRENTS, FEBRUARY—"Sharon, a Defender of Jews?" an editorial; "Self-Portrait by Leroi Jones" by Mark Naison; "NYC Coalition of Black-Jewish Leaders," a statement; "Who Decides How Many Children?" by Carol Jochnowitz. Single copies postpaid, \$1.50. Subscriptions \$12 USA. Jewish Currents, Dept. T., 22 E. 17th St., NYC 10003.

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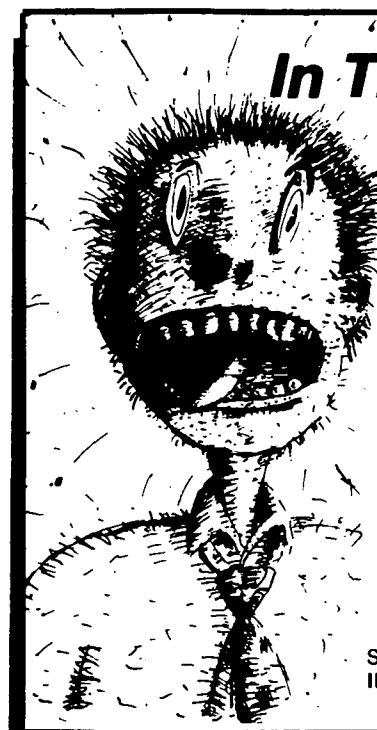
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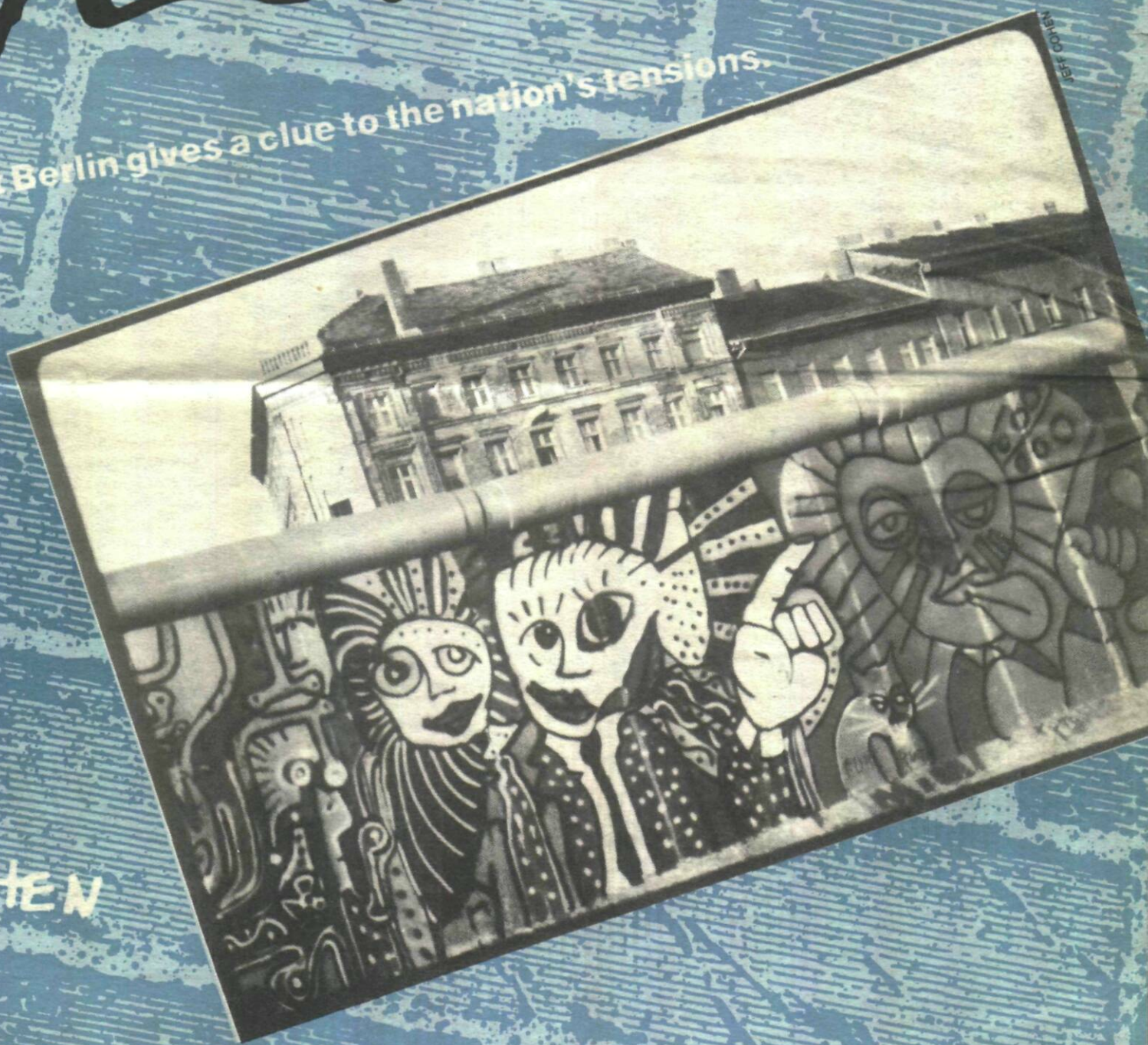
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The writing on the wall

Graffiti in West Berlin gives a clue to the nation's tensions.

By
JEFF COHEN



I'M ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BERLIN Wall. Communist Party newspapers are on prominent display. "Yanks Out" is painted across the rooftop next to the Wall. A giant billboard hangs near a busy plaza, proclaiming "U.S. Hands Off Nicaragua." It looks like an official billboard, but it's not. I am on the west side of the wall—the side occupied by the U.S. Army. And I'm in Kreuzberg, one of West Berlin's 12 boroughs and the heart of its counter-culture.

In Kreuzberg, the wall is dominated by long stretches of new-wavish murals and graffiti. It is the canvas of underground artists. Outside Kreuzberg, English lan-

guage graffiti on the wall varies from the revolting to the banal ("Kill Red Scum/Join the Klan"; "Go Minnesota Northstars").

In Kreuzberg, though, there are turns of phrase such as "Make Love, Not Walls," and "To be or NATO be." Someone has quoted Aldous Huxley against fanatics of every persuasion: "There's no single cure for what could never have a single cause."

The mural art in Kreuzberg is eclectic, including Freak Brothers, shadow paintings, futuristic scenes of robot-ruled hell and Guernica-like images of terror-stricken creatures struck down by war. Different images play on a favorite theme—that of the wall being bridged, penetrated, levitated or destroyed. One graffito reads, "Let my

paint die with the wall."

The symbols on the wall are clues to the social tensions and energy of West Berlin. The "Hands Off Nicaragua" billboard hangs from a large apartment house that doubles as a meeting place for radical groups. The building was seized years ago by squatters, who now live there legally. The squatters movement peaked in 1981, when a squatter was killed by police during a demonstration.

Squatters seized nearly 200 buildings in the early 1980s and have been legalized as tenants in dozens of them. Many buildings have been rehabilitated, aided by repair co-ops. And in these liberated buildings, Kreuzberg's counter-culture flourishes:

child-care centers, coffeehouses, consumer co-ops, alternative schools.

The "Yanks Out" slogan adorns a building, five yards from the wall, occupied by runaways and radical youth—both punks and longhairs. Live, nonstop rock pours out of the building, which is covered by graffiti like "Red Rock Revolution" and "West Berlin is the clitoris of the DDR [East Germany]."

The wall carries slogans in several languages, including Turkish. In the '60s, West Germany welcomed Turkish laborers, at rock-bottom wages. Now that they are integrated into the labor force at comparable wages (and now that some

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